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"Eden is on Puget Sound":
Folk Music Stories in the Northwest

By

Rosie Lockie Everson

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Peter Pihos, Chair

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GRADUATE SCHOOL

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Master's Thesis

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Rosie Lockie Everson

3 March 2023

"Eden is on Puget Sound":
Folk Music Stories in the Northwest

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Rosie Lockie Everson
March 3, 2023

Abstract

During the folk music revival period, roughly the early 1940s to the late 1960s, folk musicians, music collectors, and folk music insiders forged a connection between American folk music, the past, and ideas of cultural authenticity. In this national context of renewed interest in folk music traditions, folk music communities across the United States cropped up. This thesis analyzes the ideologies and activities of Pacific Northwest folk music communities in the 20th century, with a particular focus during and after the revival period. Typical narratives of the American folk music revival terminate at the end of the 1960s; however, in Washington state there continued to be vibrant and evolving communities based around folk music practice well into the 1980s. This thesis examines the use of folk music in the Northwest to reveal constructions of place and regional identity. Through an analysis of specific Washington state folk songs, communities like the Seattle Folklore Society and the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society, and the development of folk music projects forged in collaboration between folk musicians and state and national government, this thesis provides a deeper understanding to the function of folk music in the Pacific Northwest, the limits and potential of ideology, and the unstable character of the stories we tell about ourselves.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis committee chair, Dr. Peter Pihos for providing feedback, support, and a genuine enthusiasm that buoyed me along the way. Thank you to my other thesis committee members, Dr. Jennifer Seltz and Dr. Josh Cerretti. I benefited from the distinct insight you provided in your classes and am grateful to have you on my committee. Thank you to the History professors I was lucky enough to learn from: Dr. Chris Friday, Dr. Sarah Zimmerman, and Dr. Charles Anderson. Thank you to Dr. Johann Neem for offering the opportunity with the *Journal of the Early Republic,* an experience which honed my ability to locate primary sources and made editing my footnotes fly. I am thankful that WWU's History Department Chesley Research Scholarship supported my archival research. And thank you to Ruth Steele and the staff at the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies.

Thank you to the Northwest folk musicians who took the time to contribute the oral histories essential to this project: Carl Allen, Bill Murlin, Richard Scholtz, Rika Ruebsaat, Jon Bartlett, Flip Breskin, John Ullman, Irene Namkung, Linda Allen, and Vivian Williams. I was lucky to get to spend an afternoon with Vivian in her Seattle home before her passing on January 6, 2023. I hope I told your stories well.

Thank you to my cohort for being so intelligent and kind: Katelyn Damron, Courtney Doner, Kristina Kelehan, Kenneth Meyer, Kylee Moneypenny, Andy Nelson, and especially Lexy Aydelotte. Thanks for being my friend.

Thank you to anyone who may eventually read this, please let me know what you think. Finally, thank you to Daniel for carefully and thoughtfully reading these pages in a very short amount of time and being the best listener I know.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In 1914, the *Washington Standard* printed a profile of "The Old Settler," one of the oldest Northwest folk songs. The paper wrote that "it seems probable that gone forever are the good old days of ease, which old settlers still tell about, and which many still living on Puget Sound know about." According to the Olympia, WA based newspaper, the folk song could elicit cozy memories of these "good old days." The song was "graphically descriptive, reciting as it does, the old settler's coming, his previous and his new condition, the causes which compelled him to remain."[1] The song relates a tale of struggle and strife until the settler discovers "that Eden is on Puget Sound." In this singular place, the Old Settler is free "to live easy and happy...[he] laughs at the world and its shams, as [he] thinks of his pleasant condition, surrounded by acres of clams."[2] *Washington Standard* stated that the song, also printed as a poem, "was once known to every old settler and was both recited and sung at all sorts of frolics and on all sorts of public occasions." As of 1914, it was still "known to every Puget Sounder [and] should be preserved, not for its merit as poetry, but because it is a faithful picture of pioneer days."[3] For Pacific Northwesterners, the enduring appeal of the pioneer narrative in "The Old Settler" was twofold: it signified claims to land and it served as a potent marker of regional identity. "The Old Settler" positioned a limited narrative as fact, when it was closer to a shared memory or a collective dream. Over seventy years later, Washington state residents still believed that "The Old Settler" was a "real fun song and says a lot about Puget Sound."[4] What exactly "The Old Settler" said about Puget Sound was specific to

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[1] "Francis Henry and 'The Old Settler,'" *Washington Standard,* January 2, 1914, Library of Congress, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84022770/1914-01-02/ed-1/seq-1/.
[2] Linda Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore* (Spokane: Melior Publications, 1989), 17.
[3] "Francis Henry and 'The Old Settler,'" *Washington Standard,* January 2, 1914.
[4] Postcard to Linda Allen, XOE_CPNWS0354, box 4, folder "Correspondence 1986 undated, 1987 4/3," Linda Allen Papers, 1978-2018, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA.

place and deeply entrenched in regional conceptions of identity. "The Old Settler," like all Northwest folk songs, was nostalgic, evoking sentiments and constructs tied to the past. However, the application of Northwest folk music changed over time, manipulated and deployed by varied parties to suit various means. In the following chapters, this thesis looks to the history of folk music in the Northwest, in particular the years during and after the American folk music revival, to reveal how individuals, institutions, and folk music communities constructed shifting narratives of place, belonging, and identity through the unstable medium of folk music.

This intervention relies on historiography of the American folk music revival, which occurred between the 1940s and the 1960s. The revival period was a convergence of traditional cultural practices, music, and social and political ideologies that brought styles of American folk music out of isolated communities and onto the national stage. Established literature demonstrates how folk musicians understood the connection between folk music, the past, and concepts of authenticity. Historians have largely focused on the movement on a national scale yet have paid less attention to geographic locales outside of New York City and San Francisco. Literature regarding the Pacific Northwest during the folk music revival determines a folk music presence in the area but lacks insight into the motivations of individuals and the work, ideologies, and impact of local communities.[5] Using the Pacific Northwest and Washington state as a microcosm, this thesis explores and tracks how individuals, folk music communities and government agencies used

[5] See Greg Vandy and Daniel Person, *26 Songs in 30 Days: Woody Guthrie's Columbia River Songs and the Planned Promised Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2016), a significant contribution to the history of Woody Guthrie in the Pacific Northwest and outlines Guthrie's work with the Bonneville Power Administration; Kurt Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked: A City and Its Music* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); A recent and thorough account of folk music, specifically bluegrass, in the Northwest is James W. Edgar, "All Roads Lead to Darrington: Building a Bluegrass Community in Western Washington," East Tennessee State University (2021), MA thesis. https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/4005.

folk music to create and reinforce markers of regional identity and belonging across time, place, and contexts.[6]

Before turning to the folk music communities of the Pacific Northwest, it is necessary to outline the trajectory and historiography of the folk music revival on the national scale. While there is no fixed starting point to the American folk music revival, most historians begin the revival narrative in the 1930s – a time when the connections between folk music and political ideology solidified. As established by R. Serge Denisoff in the seminal *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (1971), working-class Southern and Appalachian communities used original and traditional folk songs to protest exploitation and capitalism. These instances of protest formed an initial symbolic connection between folk music, political activism and rural places, a symbolic and practical trifecta adopted by folk heroes Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger during the 1940s. Interest in American folk music surged in the 1940s as folk singers like Guthrie and Seeger repurposed folk, blues, and roots music to gain a toehold in the commercial music sector while maintaining ties to political and labor movements. During the boom period of the movement (the early 1950s to the late 1960s) urban and suburban folk singers appropriated working-class protest songs, English ballads, and Black blues songs and spirituals. The 1952 release and subsequent popularity of a sanitized version of "Tom Dooley" by the Kingston Trio, a three-man band of scrubbed-looking young men, took American folk music to a new level of commercial appeal. The making of folk music in mass culture relied on the work of song collectors and ethnomusicologists, namely John and Alan Lomax, whose recordings of rural Southern blues and Appalachian folk

[6] A note on terminology: this thesis uses the term "folk music" as folk music revivalists would have understood it at the time, which would include various forms of vernacular, roots, blues, and folk music originating from the European tradition. Folk musicians of this era often referred to "ethnic music," which, for them, meant musical traditions originating outside of the United States, like Swedish folk music, Basque dancing, or Japanese Noh theater. Indigenous music was generally referred to as "Native" music and considered by Northwest folk musicians to be part of a separate tradition.

musicians created the basis of revivalist's repertoire. For folk music revivalists, these recordings typified a kind of American folk music tradition based in authenticity which provided liberation from mass culture and mid-century sentiments of alienation. Earlier recordings, made increasingly accessible by a growing LP industry, formalized a connection between folk music and a rural American past which seemed to be at risk of disappearance for folk music revivalists. The role of folk music as protest tool, incubated in 1930s-era labor struggles, continued throughout the height of the revival. Protesters and activists adopted and deployed the folk music wisdom of "We Shall Overcome" during the civil rights movement.[7] Activist use of folk songs raised American folk music to a new level of visibility and status in the public sphere. The American folk music revival reached its zenith in the 1960s during the height of the Greenwich Village folk music scene in New York City, which brought Bob Dylan into the spotlight and inspired legions of young folk revivalists to gather at cafes to sing and strum their guitars in search of meaning and purpose. The 1960s saw the proliferation of folk music festivals and folk music stars like Dylan, Joan Baez, Odetta, and Peter, Paul and Mary. After Bob Dylan pivoted away from folk music standards and incorporated electric instrumentation into both of his 1965 albums, folk music insiders disagreed as to whether this was the death of the revival or a new turn into the future.[8]

While the zeitgeist of the movement declined by the end of the 1960s, the ethos of the folk music revival extended into later decades. In *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music,* historian Benjamin Filene uses Bob Dylan as a case study to refute the concept that

[7] "We Shall Overcome" was a popular song based on an early 20th century hymn which became an anthem of the civil rights movement, particularly during freedom rides, voter registration drives and sit-ins. Guy and Candie Carawan, *Sing for Freedom; The Story of the Civil Rights Movement Through Its Songs* (Montgomery: New South Books, 2008).

[8] One reviewer thought Dylan had, "in effect, dragged folk music, perhaps by the nape of its neck, into areas it never dreamed existed, and enriched both it and himself a thousandfold by the journey." Paul Nelson, "Highway 61 Revisited," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival,* ed. David A. DeTurk and A. Poulin, Jr. (New York: Dell Publishing, 1967), 267.

the vitality of folk music terminated at the end of the 1960s.[9] Not only did folk music communities extend the tenets of the folk music revival into the 1970s, in the 1980s city and federal government entities ushered folk culture into a new realm of official culture by means of state-sponsored songbooks and the establishment of the Northwest Folklife Festival. The implications of these events, themselves the product of collaborative relationships between folk music insiders and federal and state government, are missed by current scholarship. By tracking the use of Northwest folk songs from the start of the 20th century, with a focus on the end of the folk music revival period, this project investigates how folk singers of the Pacific Northwest used folk music to build and engage with a community specific to their location. As opposed to terminating the narrative at the close of the 1960s, this framing provides an extended view of the role of folk music and generates insight into how certain stories about Washington's past and history have achieved the strongest staying power.

Theory

The relationship between folk music and a shared pride in an imagined history is fundamental to the historiography of the 20th century American folk music revival. The concept that individuals and entities mediated folk music to construct certain ideals and standards informs the approach to folk music in the Northwest in this thesis. Nationally, folk music revivalists saw the lifestyle associated with these songs as a way to live life authentically. Through a combination of factors, folk musicians believed folk music provided a life more purposeful (when employed in protest), truthful (as an antidote to consumerism and conformity) and pure (in connection to a lost past). Folk music revivalists believed they played "true" American folk music. However, historians

[9] Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), esp. chapter five "Performing the Folk: Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan," 183-232.

have established how cultural middlemen constructed this notion. As Benjamin Filene explains in *Romancing the Folk,* folk music middlemen included ethnomusicologists like John and Alan Lomax, earlier song collectors, record company executives, and prominent public figures like Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan. Two early 20th century song collectors in particular, Cecil Sharp and Francis J. Child, collected, published, and popularized European mountain ballads, formally establishing European-American folk songs as "true" American music. Their work positioned the idea, in the public imagination, that Appalachian folk music of European origin was essentially truthful because it was removed from capital gain. This notion of a "true" American folk music, connected to rural America, was essential to the folk music revival of the 20th century. As relative outsiders to folk music culture, song collectors packaged folk music for consumption and pushed a construction of cultural authenticity. In the mid 20th century, Filene explains how as mediators between the consumer and the artist, the Lomaxes (a father and son duo) capitalized on and manipulated blues guitarist Lead Belly's image to present him as both an exoticized Other and an authentic folk music figurehead for artistic and material reasons.[10] This thesis applies the concept of middlemen, individuals who used ideology and ideals of authenticity to regulate folk music acceptability, to folk musicians and institutions in the Pacific Northwest. As artists and interpreters, they reformulated folk songs to generate regional pride, connect to certain histories, and attempt to bridge separation between Northwest communities. The concept of folk music middlemen is also useful to define the active role of government agencies as mediators in folk music projects in Washington state during the 1980s. Historians have demonstrated how a process of myth-making through folk music worked on the national stage, yet no scholarship has yet examined Pacific Northwest folk music history using the same principle.

[10] Filene, *Romancing the Folk,* chapter two "Creating the Cult of Authenticity: The Lomaxes and Lead Belly," 47-75.

This thesis applies and interacts with scholarship on place and regionalism to define how Washington state folk communities, government entities, and local actors developed folk music programs to create and reinforce constructions of identity and heritage. A central concept borrowed from scholarship on regionalism is drawn from historian Robin W. Winks, who states that region is one "basic physical reality by which people define themselves" and that "one best understands how people conceive of themselves regionally by observing what they take collective pride in."[11] In this context, folk songs are powerful lenses embedded in a region which expose how individuals and communities extracted and preserved certain ideals to define themselves. Because folk music of the revival period was based on reconstructions of tradition and the past, folk songs operated in a space between myth and reality.[12] In the Pacific Northwest, this meant that regional folk songs engaged in reenactments of shared history, namely the pioneer experience. Folk musicians conjured this aspect of local history not just to remember it as supposed fact, but because folk music helped deal with what Northwest folklorist Barre Toelken called the "traumatic realization of what it means to be at the end of the [pioneer] trail: surprise, rationalization, disappointment...qualities better handled in song than in history texts."[13] Folk songs and their use evolved to suit changing aims without severing their ties to region. In addition to centering region, this thesis engages with concepts of place and place-making. Yi-Fu Tuan's ideas of place in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* echo the relationship between myth and reality in folk music, where folk songs "share a common store of hazy knowledge (myths) concerning a far larger

[11] Robin W. Winks, "Regionalism in Comparative Perspective," in *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest,* ed. William G. Robbins, Robert J. Frank, and Richard E. Ross (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1983), 13-35, esp. 31.
[12] William G. Robbins, "Introduction," in *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest,* 1-9, Robbins states that regional communities "involve mythologies and precedents which combine to forge those particularities that we associate with sense of place. Both myth and reality, the imagined and the real, shape people's consciousness of the world about them; each transforms and alters the other," 2.
[13] Barre Toelken, "Northwest Regional Folklore," in *Northwest Perspectives: Essays on the Culture of the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 21-42, esp. 32.

field—the region or nation—in which their own local areas are embedded."[14] Like other cultural or geographic conceptions of place, folk songs existed in a tenuous space described by Tuan as "inaccurate and dyed in phantasms" while simultaneously relating to a "sense of reality of one's empirical world."[15] This thesis applies Tuan's ideas of place to Pacific Northwest folk music communities to track a genealogy of folk music use in the region. Folk songs of the Northwest were certainly "dyed in phantasms" as much as they communicated and contributed to real, lived experiences.[16]

Methodology

In terms of spatial boundaries, this thesis defines the Pacific Northwest as a region stretching from Portland, Oregon to lower British Columbia, an expanse of land with overlapping identifications and shifting borders. Seattle and Bellingham were chosen as case studies because of their dynamic folk music communities, the activities of which illustrate the complex interplay and distinctions between national, regional, and local communities during the folk music revival.

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[14] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 88.

[15] Tuan, *Space and Place,* 88.

[16] Regarding genealogy, Michel Foucault argues that "history also teaches how to laugh at the solemnities of origin." Instead of pretending to "go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity," genealogy "cultivate[s] the details and accidents that accompany every beginning" to uncover historical systems of power, "Nietzsche, Geneaology and History," accessed January 12, 2023, https://noehernandezcortez.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/nietzsche-genealogy-history.pdf, 79-81. The skepticism of history's ability to resurrect continuity is comparable to Nietzsche's critique of living historically or adhering to "monumental history," blindly devoted to the past: "the glance into the past pushes them into the future...kindles the hope that justice may still come and that happiness may sit behind the mountain toward which they are walking," Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Use and Abuse of History for Life" (1874 from *Untimely Meditations),* accessed December 19, 2022, https://t.ly/h5xT. The critical view of progress is also reflected in Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History," where the "angel of history...sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet...[it] would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise...the storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress." Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," accessed January 12, 2023, https://t.ly/-u5l. The theoretical approach of this thesis adopts a layered view of history, critical of ideations of the past and "monumental history," to complicate a reading of linear time and narratives of progress. It looks to sites of history as shifting facets of power and identity, the past and present.

Certain elements informed local identities and sense of place in Seattle: a public history centering settler-colonist stories, relative isolation and ties to the natural environment, and intense growth during the 20th century. Bellingham, a smaller city in close proximity to the Canadian border, shared certain elements but diverged at points to inform the practices of the local folk music community. Seattle and Bellingham were physically distant from the folk music center of New York City, yet they held solid ground as folk music hubs along the West Coast. Both communities experienced cross-pollination from northern and southern neighbors, including Vancouver, BC, Portland, and San Francisco, indicating that Puget Sound folkies were a part of a folk music matrix that extended beyond the Northwest region. In this way, Bellingham and Seattle are representative of other smaller folk music locales bridged to the imagined national folk music community but grounded in a regional sense of identity. This thesis focuses on the Puget Sound region with little attention paid to the eastern side of Washington state. This choice is based on the fact that there were less formalized folk music communities on the east side during the folk music revival, and folk music projects of the 1970s and 80s were based in the Puget Sound region. Folk traditions from the east side of the state no doubt influenced the character, history, and identity of Washington. However, folk songs of Washington state typically focused on the geography, climate, and culture of the west side. While not representative of the musical character of Washington state as a whole, the Seattle and Bellingham folk music communities of the mid to late 20th century contributed to new forms of a regional identity tied to the elements of life west of the Cascade Mountains.

Methodologically, oral histories establish the history of folk music communities in the Pacific Northwest. Primarily, oral histories provide first person accounts and individual historical interpretations. As established by historians Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, oral histories are

sites "for discovering, exploring and evaluating the nature of the process of historical memory – how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience and its social context and how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them."[17] Oral histories signify the spiritual and connective weight of folk music for regional musicians and communities. According to historian William H. Sewell Jr., historical events are characterized by heightened emotion, as "emotional excitement is a constitutive ingredient of many transformative actions."[18] The emotional presence in oral histories collected for this project is a testament to the transformative nature of the folk music revival, not just for the individuals who lived to recall it, but for structures of community, culture, and regional identity in the Pacific Northwest. Without the "high-pitched emotional excitement" of earnest and eager folk musicians, and the energy it generated to create programs and exchanges, the character of the region would likely be markedly changed. Sewell argues that historical events "are acts of collective creativity" where "dislocation of structures…produces in actors a deep sense of insecurity…[which is] a necessary condition for the kind of collective creativity that characterizes so many great historical events."[19] During the 1960s onward, folk musicians in the Pacific

[17] Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, eds., *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), ix. The editors are quoting Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[18] William H. Sewell, Jr., "Historical events as transformations of structures: Inventing revolution at the Bastille," *Theory and Society* 25, no. 6 (December 1996): 841-881, esp. 865.

[19] Sewell, "Historical events as transformations of structures," 865, 867, This is similar to Emile Durkheim's theory of "collective effervescence" in the context of religion. "According to Durkheim, a religion comes into being and is legitimated through moments of what he calls "collective effervescence." Collective effervescence refers to moments in societal life when the group of individuals that makes up a society comes together in order to perform a religious ritual. During these moments, the group comes together and communicates in the same thought and participates in the same action, which serves to unify a group of individuals. When individuals come into close contact with one another and when they are assembled in such a fashion, a certain "electricity" is created and released, leading participants to a high degree of collective emotional excitement or delirium. This impersonal, extra-individual force, which is a core element of religion, transports the individuals into a new, ideal realm, lifts them up outside of themselves, and makes them feel as if they are in contact with an extraordinary energy." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)," accessed January 12, 2023, https://iep.utm.edu/emile-durkheim/. Durkheim's description echoes remarkably the sentiments of Bellingham and Seattle folk musicians. Their descriptions of the transformative and/or transcendent power of folk music, specifically when sung in groups, teeters into the realm of religious devotion or fervor.

Northwest reacted to local concerns, real issues of insecurity in the face of regional change, and turned to folk traditions as a way to ameliorate these anxieties. Their first-person testimonies uncover discernable emotional reactions and an unequivocal desire for human connection that guided their activities across the region. The emotional quality of their testimonies indicates intense personal experiences which informed actions that contributed to the character of regional folk music culture.

The collection and analysis of oral histories as primary sources is not without potential pitfalls. To ensure best practices, Western Washington University's (WWU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversaw the interviews conducted as research for this thesis and monitored the ethical implications and effects of the process. WWU's IRB approved the plan of research, sample research questions, and recruitment text. The IRB also confirmed that participants signed a consent form and were given sample questions and a general outline of the research scope. This process safeguarded the rights of willing participants and ensured fairness. However, oral histories are deeply human and therefore vulnerable to certain flaws. Oral histories provide an opening in the cracks of institutional and public memory: in the form of memories and stories, individuals submit their own accounts to the historical record. In *Oral History and Public Memories,* editors Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes describe how the divide "between the individual who does the remembering and the memory of the group has never been successfully resolved... [and that] 'in order for the notion of memory to be a useful analytical concept we need to retain a sense of both its individual and collective dimensions.'"[20] To this point, this thesis employs oral histories as sites grounded in lived experience and real events which occurred in time and place and in relation to wider social and cultural processes. Best practices were undertaken to interview a variety of

[20] Hamilton and Shopes, eds., *Oral History and Public Memories,* x, xi.

participants, to maintain an awareness of interviewee-interviewer dynamics, and to aid in the integrity of memories. With this in mind, archival omissions and silences are inevitable.[21] Historian Kevin Blackburn notes that to believe "that simply being present at a historical event or participating in a historical era automatically confers interpretive authority upon a narrator" is a fallacy, and argues that "no matter how close that perspective is to the event in question, [it] does not constitute history; testimony has to be placed in context."[22] The significance of utilizing oral histories is in how they center lived, emotional experience within a greater social context. Oral histories position emotion as a sign of dislocations and articulations that shaped the course of historical events within the region. This thesis examines participant testimony within the context of national and local change and individual and group interests, valuable not just for the insight they provide into historical events, but for how they reveal limits of ideology and unintentional biases as vessels of historical silences.

This thesis tells the stories of folk music and folk music communities in the Pacific Northwest in three parts. Chapter one, "A Conversation in Place," analyzes specific folk songs of Washington state, their use across time and in varied contexts, and the symbolic value they provided for folk singers and members of the public. Many Washington state folk songs engaged in and constructed a specific narrative of place, one bound up in ideas of individualism, pioneer myths, and the natural environment. Folk musicians sang these songs across generations to communicate ideas fundamental to regional identity and fixed to the land. While there is no static

[21] For an introduction to historical silences, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
[22] Kevin Blackburn, "History From Above: The Use of Oral History in Shaping Collective Memory in Singapore" in *Oral History and Public Memories,* 39. Granting authority to a participant based solely on their proximity to an event could be seen as a kind of historical silence that ignores how "even the presumably more democratic practice of interviewing ordinary people can be subverted by nationalistic agendas and produce 'history from above' - that is, oral history shaped by the desire of the state to mold public memory according to the version of history that it endorses," 44.

beginning to this story, this chapter leads with Woody Guthrie and his employment with the Bonneville Power Administration in the early 1940s. Guthrie's employment in the Northwest was a site where he forged early incarnations of regional character in folk song in contradiction with folk music ideology. Through an analysis of regional folk music standards like "The Old Settler," this chapter tracks the changing use of folk music at the hands of a variety of stakeholders. This chapter also looks to the experiences of regional folk musicians to illustrate a paradox of place where folk musicians used folk songs to both affirm and destabilize conceptions of regional identity and community. By navigating experiences as cultural outsiders, folk musicians simultaneously connected to and across geography, and used folk performance as a mode of bridging differences despite the specificity of the songs. The insecure relationship between place and folk music points to the plasticity of cultural identity and structures of belonging.

Chapter two, "The Human Connection: Folk Music Communities in Seattle and Bellingham," investigates how folk musicians of the Pacific Northwest developed new communities based on the ideals of the folk music revival while reacting to changes in a local context during the 1970s and 80s. At the heart of these communities was an ardent desire for human connection, which was a response to shifts in Seattle and Bellingham that fueled feelings of alienation. This chapter analyzes oral histories, local newspapers, and alternative weeklies to reconstruct the social and economic changes in each city. It also uncovers the activities and ideologies central to the Seattle Folklore Society and the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society, from their attempts to connect with new audiences to the reciprocal relationships created between urban folkies and the Darrington bluegrass community. This chapter determines the ways in which individuals substantiated and reformulated distinctive constructions of regional folk culture to resolve social divisions in their respective cities. Although the activities of folk

musicians in the Northwest transmitted and contributed to broader ideas of place, cultural identity, and belonging in Washington state, their ability to enact structural change was hampered by their own limited ideologies and the force of systems of discrimination.

Chapter three, "State Sponsored Folk," analyzes how folk music programs in Washington state during the 1970s and 80s were the result of collaborative relationships between government entities and folk music communities. Government funding and interest in folk traditions, spurred by a national rise in folk culture and multiculturalism, stimulated folk music programming. Like the Seattle Folklore Society and the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society, these projects – *The Rainy Day Song Book, Washington Songs and Lore,* and the Northwest Folklife Festival – celebrated shared culture and history and relied on an ethos that prioritized participation, diversity, and connection. Through the collection, interpretation, and presentation of folk traditions, government entities and folk music insiders acted as a new kind of folk music middleman. This chapter outlines the influence of federal and state involvement in folk music projects and uncovers the agency of local actors who used their expertise and experience to guide the vision of these programs. Ultimately, this analysis tracks how state-sponsored folk programs facilitated the shift of folk culture to official culture, a process which contributed to the formalization of old and new markers of regional identity.

Chapter 1

A Conversation in Place

> Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values.
> – Yi-Fu Tuan[23]

> As I went walking that ribbon of highway
> And saw above me that endless skyway,
> And saw below me the golden valley, I said:
> God blessed America for me.
> This land was made for you and me.
> – Woody Guthrie[24]

In the introduction to *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* (1979), Canadian folksinger and song collector Phil Thomas asserts that in the Pacific Northwest region, "from the days of the early fur trade to the present, people have used their own songs to express and share their reactions to events." For Thomas and other folk singers of the folk music revival period, folk songs of the Pacific Northwest did more than that – they told a "full and varied" story that expressed a "rich heritage."[25] Folk songs, which generated "resonances between the imagery and metaphor of songs and the values and preoccupations of [the people]," told stories about life in this region centered on the varied experiences of and claims to the land.[26] Folk singers of the Pacific Northwest understood the "outstanding physical features of the state's landscape" constituted "the palette upon which" folk singers "did their best work."[27] To this end, the folk music of Washington state was tied deeply to place. Songs like “The Bold Northwestern Man” and “Roll On, Columbia” engaged in and constructed a specific narrative of place, one tangled with pioneer myths and a particular landscape found along Puget Sound. This chapter positions place as central to concepts of shared

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[23] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 54.
[24] Woody Guthrie, "This Land is Your Land," accessed December 19, 2022, https://www.woodyguthrie.org/Lyrics/This_Land.htm.
[25] Philip J. Thomas, *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* (Saanichton, BC: Hancock House Publishers, 1979), 6.
[26] James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 223.
[27] Linda Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 48.

identity and reveals how folk songs communicated and constructed place-stories specific to the Puget Sound region.[28] It tracks how folk songs, as artifacts reinterpreted over the decades, were re-tooled by folk musicians in changing contexts to appeal to variable audiences. The final section of this chapter illustrates how folk musicians participated in a kind of paradox of place, where they believed folk songs reinforced conceptions of shared heritage and bridged barriers of lived experience and physical place.

Folk Music and Place on the National Stage

American folk musicians of the 20th century recognized a connection between folk music and geographic location. As established by historian R. Serge Denisoff, working-class Southern and Appalachian communities used original and traditional folk songs to protest labor conditions and their exploitation at the hands of a capitalist system. This connection relied on a relationship and fixedness to the land, in this case a life spent working in the mines. Denisoff explains that through union movements, labor strikes, and labor colleges of the 1930s and 40s, which tapped a well of rural folk music to develop rallying cries for justice and a rhetoric of protest, activists forged an inextricable connection between folk music and Leftist politics born out of a particular place. For example, the Harlan County coal strikes in Kentucky (1931-1932) resulted not just in bloody altercations and accusations of Communism but generated original folk songs by local songsters. These songs, like Sarah Ogan Gunning's "I Hate the Company Bosses" (1937), espoused a new political consciousness that was, according to Denisoff, "not previously found in folk

[28] The concept of "place-stories" is borrowed from historian Coll Thrush, which he discusses in *Native Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), xiii- 4. Thrush uses "place-stories" as a term that means "stories in and of place" which define the relationship between community and the land. He also states that "place-stories" "capture the conjunction between sites of history and the accounts we make of them, whether we are Native or newcomer. These stories necessarily braid together, they interact, and they entangle and inform each other in ways that are often difficult to make sense of." In any place, people tell themselves stories about the land and their place in it; Thrush's conception of "place-stories" is an effective framing.

material."[29] In actuality, the history of songs of the people and labor activism began much earlier in the 20th century. Following the 1905 "Continental Congress of the Working Class" convention in Chicago and the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Northwest workers assembled and initiated campaigns against timber and mining companies. Known colloquially as the "Wobblies," labor activists and union members held major strikes in Portland, Tacoma, and Spokane in 1908. Spokane's IWW formed their own Industrial Union Band to perform labor songs, patriotic tunes, and religious ditties publicly to inform listeners about the misdeeds of their capitalist overlords.[30] In 1909, Spokane IWW members published *The Little Red Songbook,* a collection of labor and folk songs designed to promote solidarity and buoy morale among workers, which featured songs by labor activist Joe Hill and the classic labor song "Solidarity Forever." Between 1913 and 1919, IWW conflicts occurred across the state from Everett to Spokane, and a tragic encounter between IWW members and the American Legion in Centralia resulted in the death of six individuals. Amid this, the *Songbook,* "by far the most popular work produced by the Industrial Workers of the World," attracted potential members to join the organization and provided "good propaganda [which] held the crowd for Wobbly speakers."[31] IWW member Richard Brazier described this effective propaganda as:

> songs of battles won (but never any songs of despair), songs that hold up flaunted wealth and thread-bare morality to scorn, songs that lampoon our masters and the parasitic vermin, such as the employment-sharks and their kind, who bedevil the workers. These songs will deal with every aspect of the workers' lives. They will bring hope to them, and courage to wage the good fight. They will be songs sowing the seeds of discontent and rebellion. We want our songs to stir the workers into action, to awaken them from an apathy and complacency that has made them accept their servitude as though it had been divinely ordained. We are sure that the power of song will exalt the spirit of Rebellion.[32]

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[29] R. Serge Denisoff, *Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 24.
[30] Peter Blecha, "Fanning the Flames: Northwest Labor Song Traditions," Historylink.org, February 5, 2006, https://www.historylink.org/File/7575.
[31] Richard Brazier, "The Story of the I.W.W.'s 'Little Red Songbook,'" *Labor History* 9 (1968): 91-92.
[32] Brazier, "The Story of the I.W.W.'s 'Little Red Songbook,'" 97.

The symbolic power resulting from the cohesion of folk music and political activism was indispensable fodder for popular folk singers of the 1940s who adopted these coded conventions to generate political fervor and inspire a new generation of folk musicians. Around 1940, a time when the public experienced a renewed interest in folk music, two of the most well-known American folk singers joined in solidarity with the American labor movement. Performing as the Almanac Singers as part of a CIO/CPUSA sponsored tour to support union-organizing drives, Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger donned overalls, readied their banjos, and belted out union songs and Lead Belly blues to preach the gospel of workers' rights. The songs they sung originated from distinct locales and contexts: Appalachian coal mining communities, IWW songbooks, and songs from Black artists on prison farms in the South, to name a few. Much of this material came from Alan Lomax, who drew thousands of folk songs from the "eddies of human society" and compiled them into landmark collections like *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (1934), a compendium representative of American folk music writ large.[33] By gathering folk songs from diverse and disparate traditions under an umbrella of American folk music, Lomax fortified a relationship between American folk song and place. Where folk music was once part of the fabric of individual lives within distinct communities in specific places, it was now distilled into an overhead category of American folk music symbolically affiliated with activism and rural lifestyles readily usable by revivalist folk performers. According to historians Ron Eyermen and Scott Barretta, the Almanac Singers, who "had the appeal of seeming authentically American" thanks to the embrace of this material, combined "the folk form and the ideological content [in a] powerful way" to influence the political and social consciousness of both workers and the folk singers who would later emulate

[33] Ron Eyermen and Scott Barretta, "From the 30s to the 60s: The Folk Music Revival in the United States," *Theory and Society* 25, no. 4 (Aug 1996): 513.

them.[34] Their songs and public image held symbolic power to compel workers to accept the Leftist politics communicated in songs of discontent and labor rights. It did not hurt that Socialist and Communist political ideas would not have seemed foreign to recent European immigrants, and when set to music by folk musicians, the messages were further bolstered by those convincing "authentically American" associations.

During the early 1950s to the late 1960s, the commercial and national boom period of the movement, urban and suburban folk singers identified with the values of activism and constructs of American folk song authenticity. Denisoff establishes how new folk musicians were "motivated...to present rural music as the genre of the urban proletariat" in a kind of continuation of the precedent set by Guthrie and Seeger, where folk music provided a return to simpler times alongside community activism.[35] For example, folk revivalists adopted and refigured Sarah Ogan Gunning's "I Hate the Company Bosses" into "I Hate the Capitalist System," the title of a 1973 Barbara Dane release that focused on the struggles of the American working class. The proliferation of folk music popularized by mainstream folk acts contributed to a kind of conglomeration of place in American folk music. This was facilitated by the growth of the LP industry, the publication of recordings gathered by Depression and New Deal era ethnomusicologists, and the Smithsonian Folkways Records' release of the *Anthology of American Folk Music* in 1952. Collections like these assembled rare roots and folk music recordings from across the country into packages more easily accessible and digestible by folk revivalists.

The *Anthology of American Folk Music,* which consisted of music originally recorded between 1926 and 1933 and assembled from the personal collection of artist and collector Harry

[34] Eyermen and Barretta, “From the 30s to the 60s,” 514-515.
[35] Denisoff, *Great Day Coming,* 8..

Smith, was particularly influential among folk revival musicians.[36] The *Anthology* provided a vast reserve of material for folkies that represented an authentic American musical tradition, songs which would become standards in the folk music revival era. Because the songs in the *Anthology* were chosen for their "unusual instrumentation, irregular...playing technique, lyrical digressions or amendments, [and] language or dialect differences" they communicated to listeners a "pervasive sense of oddness." This strangeness reinforced the connection between folk music and a distant, bizarre, and forgotten America which was made appealing in its distance from the polluting influence of popular culture.[37] In other words, because the collection wove disparate ends into a conglomerate and representative quilt, it offered "lost, archaic, savage sounds [which] seemed to carry some peculiarly American meaning" for burgeoning folk musicians.[38] According to historian Robert Cantwell, the *Anthology* perpetuated a myth of lost American folk music traditions – although they were still very much alive in many places – and offered a "memory theater" where participants could access and engage modes of the perceived past. Smithsonian Folkways, consciously or not, activated these constructions of folk music authenticity. Smith's original choice for the album cover was a rendering of the Celestial Monochord, a drawing from a 17th century

[36] Although issued by Smithsonian Folkways and shepherded by Moses Asch, Harry Smith was responsible for the assembling, editing, and writing of the liner notes for the *Anthology.* Robert Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 191. The album catalogues, or "handbooks," are an artistic and intellectual feat in their own right, assembled in a wild style alongside extensive information. Smith's collection was comprised of old-time, blues, country and folk music, many records of which were considered "race records." Harry Smith has a few connections to the Pacific Northwest. He spent part of his youth in Whatcom County and undertook serious anthropological work by studying and making recordings of traditional practices on the Lummi reservation (which disappeared at some point). John Cohen, "A Rare Interview with Harry Smith, John Cohen, December 1968," *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine* 19, issue 1 (April/May 1969). For more about Harry Smith in the Northwest, see Bret Lunsford, *Sounding for Harry Smith: Early Pacific Northwest Influences* (Anacortes: Know Your Own & P.W. Elverum & Sun, 2021); Kevin M. Moist, "Collecting, Collage, and Alchemy: The Harry Smith Anthology of American Folk Music as Art and Cultural Intervention," *American Studies* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 111-127.

[37] Rory Crutchfield, "Discovering authenticity? Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music,*" Popular Music 4.1 (2009), 5-21, esp. 5.

38 Jon Pankake, "*The Brotherhood of the Anthology*," Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* compact disc box set (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings): 26-28.

German text. In place of this, Folkways opted for a WPA era photograph of a "grinning, unshaven, poverty-stricken, self-conscious man, a tenant farmer apparently...a totem of the New Deal...[an icon] of the socialist romance."[39] The photograph of the weathered laborer on the cover of the *Anthology* reinforced associations of folk music, labor activism, and rural place even though it bore no specific connection to its musical contents. The *Anthology* encouraged folkies to embrace traditional music as a cultural marker of authenticity, even though what allowed for the contemporary transmission of folk music were the instruments of modernity itself.[40]

The decontextualized material of the *Anthology* contributed to a construction of place that erased "the popular categories" of geography to the point of a "complete breakdown," as described by Robert Cantwell in *When We Were Good.*[41] In the liner notes to the original 1952 issue of the *Anthology,* Folkways Production Director Moses Asch acknowledged that this American conglomeration of music was "truly a people's music...belonging to this land and this people." Asch also drew a divide between the rural musicians featured in the collection and the urban consumer, noting "that to the people who live in these localities, the tunes and songs heard on these records...are still the intimate part of their lives rather than the commercial or classic music heard and accepted by us urbanites."[42] Not only does this commentary link American folk music and rurality, it frames two opposing narratives based in place: one of authentic, rural folk music communities that experienced music integrated into their respective communities, and another of city folkies who consumed the music through a commercial filter and across physical distance. The *Anthology* made this divide known to young folk musicians exposed to the collection for the

[39] Cantwell, *When We Were Good,* 193, 204.
[40] The instruments were new recording technologies and wider networks of dissemination, like radio and television.
[41] Cantwell, *When We Were Good,* 193-194.
[42] Moses Asch is quoting music critic Charles Edward Smith. The original quote appears in "Documenting America," July issue of *Long Player.* Anthology of American Folk Music liner note. The Harry Smith Project: The Anthology of American Folk Music Revisited," CD Set, SHOUT! Factory, 2006.

first time and inspired Pete Seeger "and many other young revivalists into North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and Mississippi to seek long-lost musicians...whose younger voices had been preserved there, and to coax them out of retirement."[43] These seemingly authentic blues and folk musicians came into the cities from their homes in Southern states to make new recordings, perform at folk festivals, and take advantage of the rehabilitated commercial possibility of their music. They provided new contributions to a repertoire adopted by urban revivalists, and consolidated their songs previously contained to the South into the national folk music canon. In this way, the *Anthology* was a site of the changing relationship between folk song and place which both tightened and stretched the old ties between folk music and experience of the land.

Washington Folk Songs in Place

These ties were just as evident in the most well-known and oft-sung folk songs of the Northwest. In these songs, which evoked the surrounding geography to construct place in the civic imagination, specific characteristics of the land featured prominently. Folk songs evoked certain particularities associated with sense of place, and according to historians of regionalism in the Pacific Northwest, these imagined and real qualities shaped "people's consciousness of the world about them."[44] In fact, the genealogy of place-making in the region began at a time predating white settlement in the Pacific Northwest. Before Puget Sound became Puget Sound in the eyes of settlers, Coast Salish tribes had long deployed complex and specific systems of place names that reflected spiritual ties to the physical landscape, often evoked through song.[45] Because Northwest folk

[43] Cantwell, *When We Were Good,* 191.
[44] William G. Robbins, Robert J. Frank and Richard E. Ross, eds., *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1983), 2.
[45] In *The Structure of Twana Culture* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1960), anthropologist William W. Elmendorf describes Twana place names specific to unique features of the landscape, many of which served as markers for storytelling and history, 48-49. This is just one example of Indigenous place naming traditions among a Coast Salish tribe. For more information on the topic of Coast Salish song, see Charlotte Coté, *Spirits of Our*

music was non-Native, it communicated an exclusively non-Native conception of place. Regional songs formalized in the public imagination into the 20th century were compositions that reflected a settler narrative and celebrated non-Native ideals of progress over the landscape. In the context of Washington state folk music and the folk music revival period, one of the most enduring examples of this were Woody Guthrie's Columbia River ballads.

Guthrie's Columbia River ballads, the objective of his employment with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) beginning in 1941, celebrated Northwest land and the possibility of harnessing its power and resources. The seeds of the BPA sprouted in a post-New Deal era when public utilities controlled the distribution and production of electricity. To provide power to rural areas at low cost, Congress approved the Bonneville Project Act which was subsequently signed by Roosevelt into law in 1937. The Act established the BPA as a power agency that "would market and transmit power from federal dams and 'give preference and priority...to public bodies and cooperatives'" stemming from the hydroelectric power generated by the Bonneville Dam.[46] In this sense, the Bonneville Project Act solidified a victory over private utilities. From as early as 1938, BPA publicity used hyperbolic optimism as rhetorical device. In a BPA pamphlet, superintendent James Delmage Ross pontificated that the BPA would fulfill Thomas Jefferson's dream of "'a great, free and independent empire on the banks of the Columbia'...[where] our broad acres can be a haven of happiness for the millions of Americans whose eyes are turned westward to the Pacific."[47]

Whaling Ancestors: Revitalizing Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth Traditions (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010); Jay Miller, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Willie Smyth and Esmé Ryan, eds., *Spirit of the First People: Native American Music Traditions of Washington State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Pamela Amoss, *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978). George Vancouver named Puget Sound after Peter Puget, one of his lieutenants, in 1792, Williams, *Homewaters,* 4.

[46] "Bonneville Power Administration: History," Northwest Power and Conservation Council, accessed January 7, 2023, https://www.nwcouncil.org/reports/columbia-river-history/bpahistory/. Construction on the Bonneville Dam, located along the Columbia River between Washington and Oregon, began in 1933 and was completed in 1938.

[47] Northwest Power and Conservation Council, "Bonneville Power Administration: History."

The BPA quickly succeeded in a massive feat of rural electrification, building transmission lines to Vancouver, Eugene and Aberdeen in the 1930s and 40s, forming public utilities in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho and servicing over "40,000 customers in rural communities and on farms" across the region.[48] The influence and impact of the BPA and hydroelectric power became a defining feature in the region into the second half of the century, and transformed the landscape by expanding industry, agriculture, and access to power.[49] In the early 1940s, the Department of the Interior was so invested in ensuring the BPA's success that they hired Woody Guthrie, a figurehead of American folk music, to encourage hydroelectric enthusiasm among regional voters and residents.

The intent of the Guthrie-BPA project was to "turn the citizens into true believers in the [BPA's] Columbia River projects," and Woody Guthrie's status as a mouthpiece for the people provided value in his appeal to the public. To that end, Guthrie's ballads created lasting impact as regional place-stories. Their hold on the imaginations of Washington state folk singers continued into the second half of the twentieth century.[50] Guthrie himself described the power of a folk song to reinforce identity and community, pointing out that "when a song or a ballad mentions the name of a river, a town, a spot, a fight, or the sound of somebody's name that you know and are familiar with, there is a sort of quiet kind of pride come up through your blood."[51] In "Roll, On Columbia," the most well-known song in the collection, Guthrie calls out the names of regional rivers, the "Yakima, Snake, and the Klickitat, too," and exalts the "green Douglas firs where the waters cut

[48] Northwest Power and Conservation Council, "Bonneville Power Administration: History."
[49] For greater detail on the development and impact of the Grand Coulee Dam and the BPA, see Richard White, *The Organic Machine* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), esp. 59- 88; E. Kimbark MacColl, *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915-1950* (Portland: The Georgian Press, 1979), esp. 436-452.
[50] Greg Vandy and Daniel Person, *26 Songs in 30 Days: Woody Guthrie's Columbia River Songs and the Planned Promised Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2016), 5. The quote is from BPA's public information officer Stephen Kahn.
[51] Vandy and Person, *26 Songs in 30 Days,* xii.

through/down her wild mountains and canyons she flew." On a basic level, Guthrie's Columbia River ballads conveyed archetypes of natural majesty, pastoral bounty, and the "promise of redemption through...new technology."[52] Written to evoke "a sort of quiet pride," these ballads inscribed the Pacific Northwest as wild and raw, qualities which made Northwest resources attractive and available for industry. It wasn't long after Guthrie recorded the Columbia River ballads that they became popular enough to be played "over radio stations" and to have received "lots of good letters" to the BPA in response.[53] The popularity of "Roll On, Columbia" extended to schools and summer camps – in the 1950s the song appeared in children's songbooks, and when the song was re-released in 1960 it "appeared on a record that accompanied a school book."[54] Guthrie's Columbia River ballads were powerful propaganda for the BPA, and, ironically, helped usher in a new era of government power over private utilities. They also encouraged sentiments of civic pride and belonging amongst a broad demographic. The ballads glorified and reinforced the idea of the Pacific Northwest as a rich, bountiful landscape, it's power a valuable resource in the march towards progress. As an early inscriber of regional place-stories, like a set of texts retold and revised, Guthrie's Columbia River ballads initialized a reproduceable genealogy for later folk singers, one based on the relationship between folk music, history, and place. Northwest folksinger

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[52] John R. Gold, "Roll On Columbia: Woody Guthrie, Migrants' Tales, and Regional Transformation in the Pacific Northwest," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 18, no. 1 (1998), 91. Gold argues that two narrative themes emerge in the Columbia River Ballads: "migrants' tales and the notion of electricity as a progressive force for both regional and social transformation." Gold also argues that Guthrie, in composing the Columbia River Ballads, thought of his role as "that of social documentarist," 84. Historians have described Woody Guthrie's own relationship to the BPA project as complex. See Mark Pedelty, "Woody Guthrie and the Columbia River: Propaganda, Art, and Irony" *Popular Music and Society* 31, no 3 (July 2008), 329-355. Pedelty notes that Guthrie's Columbia River songs communicated three central premises: "(1) technical awe and optimism, (2) concern for working people, and (3) an appreciation for the natural environment of the Pacific Northwest," 333. Pedelty points to Guthrie's "keen sense of critical irony" in his music while arguing that he created "powerful propaganda in support of the BPA project," 333, 336.

[53] Woody Guthrie in a 1947 letter to Moses Asch of Smithsonian Folkways Records. Vandy and Person, *26 Songs in 30 Days,* 123.

[54] Vandy and Person, *26 Songs in 30 Days,* 129-130. Bill Murlin also stated that "those songs became well known and 'Roll On, Columbia' in particular was being sung in schools in the Pacific Northwest long before I put out my song book," September 1, 2021.

Bill Murlin, who re-discovered and re-issued Guthrie's original recordings as a BPA employee in the 1980s, believed that "whatever you think about what Woody Guthrie was talking about, [it was] history," and that he left "quite a legacy for the Pacific Northwest: songs written specifically for the Pacific Northwest, in the Pacific Northwest, about the Pacific Northwest by a now famous folk musician, folk songwriter."[55] Murlin stated that Guthrie's contribution was certainly "going to be part of our history for a long, long time," and indeed it has well beyond the institution of "Roll On, Columbia" in local schools, songbooks, and efforts to establish it as the official state song.[56] Guthrie's legacy continued to hold interest at the close of the 20th century. Between 1998 and 2009, Washington state folksinger Carl Allen travelled across the state performing as Guthrie as part of a Humanities Washington program called "Inquiring Minds," bringing his "legacy to life at community gatherings."[57] As recently as 2017, a whole 75 years after the fact, contemporary folk singers, including Bill Murlin and Carl Allen, recorded covers of the Columbia River ballads on *Roll Columbia: Woody Guthrie's 26 Northwest Songs*.

Still, Guthrie's Columbia River ballads provided more than a significant contribution to Pacific Northwest history or even regional folk music history. They also reveal the extent to which ideas of place and belonging were unstable. During their time, Guthrie's ballads romanticized Northwest landscapes to encourage public support of technology which helped to speed a process of modernization. The changing landscape, altered by industry and capital at an alarming pace, would be fodder for later folk musicians in the 20th century who lamented the changes in regional

[55] Interview with Bill Murlin, September 1, 2021. Guthrie's Columbia River recordings were not released or published comprehensively until 1987. After discovering the original recordings, Murlin worked with the BPA and Rounder Records to produce the *Columbia River Collection*, a compilation of Guthrie's Columbia River Ballads. A songbook titled *Woody Guthrie: Roll on Columbia, the Columbia River Songs* was also published in 1987. Vandy and Person describe the development of these projects in *26 Songs in 30 Days,* 135-142.
[56] Interview with Bill Murlin, September 1, 2021.
[57] Samuel Dunnington, "Inquiring Minds Illuminated Woody Guthrie's Time in the Northwest," Humanities Washington, March 13, 2014, https://www.humanities.org/blog/inquiring-minds-illuminated-woody-guthries-time-in-the-northwest/.

character at the hands of progress. This is an early example of the paradox of place in Washington state music, an irony where folk music venerated the enduring landscape while accelerating its change, inspiring later folk musicians who adopted traditional practices to mourn these changes. It was not just the Columbia River ballads that operated within these bounds of contradiction. Other, and sometimes older, popular folk songs of the region relied heavily on a similar iconography of Pacific Northwest land and indicated a tenuous relationship to progress. Throughout the 20th century, these songs offered valuable material for reinforcing and engaging in place-based mythologies.

Although "The Old Settler" and "Seattle Illahee" date to the mid-to-late 1800s, both folk songs provide insight into regional narratives so compelling that folk musicians sang and performed them across decades. Considered by Canadian folksong collector Phil Thomas to be the oldest folk song found orally in the Pacific Northwest, "Seattle Illahee" included "a mixture of English and Chinook Jargon" and "painted a vivid, if vulgar, picture of Seattle's attractions." *Illahee*, a Chinook word that meant "home" or "place," was also the name of an early Seattle brothel which was "staffed mostly by Native women."[58] Certainly, "Seattle Illahee" evoked a specifically Northwest sense of place that centered a male, settler experience:

> There'll be mowitch [venison]
> And klootchman [Indian women] by the way
> When we 'rive at Seattle Illahee [Seattle country].
> Row, boys, row! Let's travel
> To the place they call Seattle
> That's the place to have a spree!
> Seattle Illahee
> There'll be hiyu [many] clams
> And klootchman [Indian women] by the way
> Hiyu tenas moosum [lots of "little sleep"]

[58] Thrush, *Native Seattle,* 40-41. Thrush uses the popularity and use of "Seattle Illahee," to argue that early Seattle was "as much an indigenous place as a settler one" during this period, 41. This is certainly true; however, the song itself had little relationship to any Coast Salish culture or musical tradition, outside of the use of Chinook jargon.

Till daylight fades away.[59]

"Seattle Illahee" conjured visions of unrestrained consumption built into the landscape: food, sex ("little sleep"), and freedom. As early as 1870, Seattle's Pioneer Book Store sold sheet music copies of the tune, which was, according to historian Kurt E. Armbruster, ubiquitous enough to have been considered "old hat" by that time.[60] Nevertheless, almost one hundred years later, Phil Thomas included "Seattle Illahee" in *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* (1979) for both its professed historical importance and as fodder for contemporary folksingers of the late folk music revival period. Thomas described the "powerful imaginative effect [it held] on the whole male population of the Puget Sound Country" during the first decades of the 20th century. As a reminder of the supposed good old times, he noted that "old timers still relate fabulous legends from those happy days." [61] Thomas printed these observations alongside full lyrics and sheet music. encouraging contemporaneous folkies to adopt the tune. This points to the fact that during its own time, *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* was a collection which presented music to be played rather than studied. By singing "Seattle Illahee," folksingers could revisit the long-gone brothels and extensive clam beds of Seattle ("the place to have a spree!"), grasping at the "happy days" of fertile abundance edged out in the sprawl of Seattle's urban center. In this way, songs like "Seattle Illahee" provided conduits to engage in and extend specific conceptions of place, a reaction against modernity that manifested as an acute, romantic longing for the past.

The relationship between Northwest folk songs and place is further evident in "The Old Settler Song," also known as "Acres of Clams." Like "Seattle Illahee," "The Old Settler" evoked

[59] "Chinook Jargon Songs, Part 1," Chinook Jargon, Linguistic Archaeology of the Pacific NW, last modified May 9, 2012, https://chinookjargon.com/2012/05/09/chinook-jargon-songs-part-1/.
[60] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 44.
[61] Thomas, *Songs of the Pacific Northwest,* 61.

an old local saying that pointed to the ubiquity and importance of abundant marine resources in the Puget Sound imagination: "when the tide is out, the table is set."[62] Originally composed around 1874 by Francis Henry, a police court judge in Pierce County, almost a hundred years later it was considered by Northwest folkies to be "the most popular folk song in Washington."[63] As described in the introduction to *The Northwest Coast, Or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory,* an 1857 autobiography by the prominent settler James G. Swan, the Pacific Northwest of Henry's time was a world away from "the polite and predictable world of commerce...[and] middle class life" of American cities. It was a place where settlers could seize the opportunity to build a new life under circumstances of their own making. For example, newcomers like Swan could and did sail to the sawmill village of Port Townsend to file a claim for free land and make a living harvested straight from the land, whether that was plundering "timber from lands they did not own" or packing salmon and shellfish "from the endless rivers or bays." In the Northwest, the lifestyle depended on the tides and vagaries of the weather, but in exchange, newcomers were far removed and "untroubled from the currents of progress."[64]

The original version of "The Old Settler" describes the challenges of settler life while praising Puget Sound as a destination of freedom and plenty. By the end of the song, and after much toil, the old settler is "used to the climate" and sings:

> No longer the slave of ambition,
> I laugh at the world and its shams,
> As I think of my happy condition
> Surrounded by acres of clams.[65]

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[62] David B. Williams, *Homewaters: A Human and Natural History of Puget Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021), 155.
[63] Linda Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book* (Bellingham: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1978), 6.
[64] James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast, Or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory* (1972; reis., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1857), v-vii. Cited text is from the Introduction by Norman H. Clark.
[65] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 16-17.

In a simplistic sense, "The Old Settler" signifies a pervasive pioneer myth cultivated from the land. It tells an idealistic story of physical struggle, rugged individualism, and the conquest of virgin territory, an Eden on Puget Sound overflowing with natural bounty. This dialogue, one that inscribed a white settler narrative, constitutes the backbeat to many earlier and later Washington state folk songs. In "Little Old Log Cabin on my Claim," a variation of a traditional Irish ballad with lyrics reworked by Seattle folksinger and collector Paul Ashford in 1978, the narrator sings:

> I've been eating fish exclusively since living on my claim,
> and such vittles ain't the kind I love the best.
> Oh, the door is made of drift-wood, the roof it leaks like sin.
> Floorboards float when the rain comes pour-in' in.
> Hark I hear a geo-duck, as he nestles in the muck, round the little old log cabin on my claim.[66]

Pacific Northwest folk songs cultivated a romanticized version of the hardships of settler life and concurrently planted the idiosyncratic seeds of regional identity: proximity to natural resources, geographic and cultural isolation, the rain, freedom, and self-sufficiency. "Little Old Log Cabin on my Claim" could be seen as subverting the ideal of the Northwest Promised Land, by way of the dreary dampness and near failure it suggests. At the same time, like "The Old Settler," it reinforced an ideal of apparent and rightful settler land ownership and strengthened a self-satisfied brand of regional identity tied to settler colonialism. In the end, it didn't matter that the roof leaked and that the cabin sat surrounded by muck because it happened on "my claim." As established by environmental historian David B. Williams in *Homewaters: A Human and Natural History of Puget Sound,* to settlers, as much as it is now, "private land ownership in the American sense was a source of status and power."[67] Through generational re-tellings, the new settler became

[66] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 9.
[67] Williams, *Homewaters,* 44.

figure of "The Old Settler" and his entitlement to the land – and the status and power it provided him – went unquestioned.

While songs that celebrated settler histories grew out of temporal proximity to those lived experiences, their utility extended beyond closed circuits of settlers and folk musicians. "The Old Settler" was not only "catchy enough to last for centuries," its associations communicated something essentially Northwest that appealed to a wide audience.[68] As early as 1906, a regional outdoor club called the Mountaineers sang "The Old Settler" at events and camping trips, a practice which continued all the way up to 1930. However, the lyrics to "The Old Settler" were not static. In 1904, the original lyricist Francis Henry included an amended version of "The Old Settler" in his book *Reminiscences of Washington Territory.* The updated lyrics mourn the loss of the pioneer spirit at the hands of growing commerce and the destruction of natural resources, the polluting influence of progress the Old Settler had escaped. Where before there were "acres of clams" and freedom from ambition, now there were people who "dare not be social and hearty, for they fear they may soil their clothes" and who waste "the natural resources our bountiful waters contain" by "canning our clams and our oysters and shipping them off for more gain."[69] In fact, commercial fish harvesting began in the Puget Sound in the 1850s, a small scale industry that grew in the 1870s with the opening of salmon canneries. By the 1890s, state and federal commission reports "consistently noted that unrestrained harvests could not continue without consequence." In 1901, locals saw the significant decline of oysters in Willapa Bay in addition to added volume of catch, pollution from pulp mills, and increased irrigation leading to the decline of salmon in Puget Sound.[70] In a region defined by its acres of clams, the waning of what had been believed to be

[68] Byron Fish, "'Old Settler' Tune Traced to 1892 Presidential Campaign," *Seattle Daily Times*, April 12, 1963, 48.
[69] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 7.
[70] Williams, *Homewaters,* 160-161, 191.

endless shook the foundation of residents' livelihoods and conceptions of place. This reaction is evident in Henry's updated version of "The Old Settler," where he formalizes the distinction between the original settlers (for him, those deserving of the land) and the unwelcome and greedy newcomers who violate social and natural law by introducing industry to the virgin landscape. Suddenly, the old settlers were no longer "untroubled from the currents of progress," as described in Swan's *The Northwest Coast.* From our contemporary viewpoint, both versions of "The Old Settler" appear to bolster a settler-colonialist identity tied to land, a system of what historian Robin Winks called "commonly held beliefs which, even though they may be proved false, are so widely and tenaciously held that they serve the function of truth." It is these vital lies, which distinguished settlers from Indigenous habitants, and desirable white settlers from unwanted white settlers, that were held tightly because they were fundamental to a "sense of worth, a sense of place, and, most important, a sense of separation and distance from others."[71] In this way, "The Old Settler" fortified existing ties by maintaining claims to heritage and land while simultaneously widening division between groups. This explains why "The Old Settler" was a popular tune at events throughout the 20th century, especially those which celebrated a settler legacy and ties to the landscape.

At a 1924 birthday celebration for famous Northwest settler Ezra Meeker, old-timers gathered to reminisce on the literal "making of pioneer history." A performance of "The Old Settler" by Charles H. Ross of Puyallup, who was born on the Oregon trail in 1851, buttressed the event. Ross regaled the exclusively over-seventy crowd with memories of "trail blazing days" when "Washington and Oregon territories were being carved out and the Oregon trail was young."[72] In this context, "The Old Settler" evoked for attendees the halcyon days of lost youth

[71] Robin Winks, "Regionalism in Comparative Perspective," in *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest,* ed. William G. Robbins, Robert J. Frank, and Richard E. Ross, 27.
[72] "Ezra Meeker Celebrations 94th Birthday," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 30, 1924, 11.

alongside their life's work to excavate the land and build the foundations of settler society. Meeker, who platted the town of Puyallup in 1877 and was an ardent promoter of settling the Washington Territory during the 1870s and 80s, lent an influential hand in settling the Northwest. For example, Meeker wrote an 80-page pamphlet in 1870 called *Washington Territory West of the Cascades* and traveled to the east coast to "spread the gospel of Puget Sound's wonders." He sold over 2,500 copies of the pamphlet to Jay Cooke, a financier selling Northern Pacific Railroad bonds, to raise money for a transcontinental line. Cooke used the pamphlet as a sales tool and hired Meeker to tour New England and inspire interest in settling the Pacific Northwest. Meeker also travelled to London in 1886 to represent the Washington Territory at the Colonial and Indian Exposition. Starting in 1906, Meeker made four trips across the country to promote the Oregon Trail and pioneer history, placing trail markers and operating a "pioneer restaurant concession and memorabilia display."[73] It was likely these types of interventions that Francis Henry bemoaned in his early 20th century revision of "The Old Settler." Nevertheless, it made sense to residents in their sundown years to memorialize Meeker, pointing to both the power of the pioneer narrative and the function of folk music to deepen settler narratives in the civic imagination.[74] "The Old Settler" endured at the tail end of the pioneer era because its iconography represented power and legacy to those who lived it – the Meekers' of the Northwest – who intended to safeguard their own legacy as they drew closer to the grave. Folk songs like "The Old Settler" generated the type of pride necessary in maintaining an illusion that ownership of land, of place, was sustainable or even possible at all. Into the post-war period, material-minded individuals adopted the symbolism of "The Old Settler" to appeal to an even more mass audience: consumers.

[73] Paula Becker, "Meeker, Ezra (1830-1928)," Historylink.org, last modified May 2, 2006, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.historylink.org/file/7737.
[74] Another instance of public performances of "The Old Settler" include a 1936 pioneer reunion. "Pioneers to Hold Olympia Reunion," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* July 6, 1936, 2.

The use of "The Old Settler" by Seattle-based folk musician and restauranteur Ivar Haglund provides evidence as to how romantic ideals of Northwest land were ingrained in local culture, specifically associations tied to marine resources and notions of the past. Haglund repurposed the folk song into a community anthem and a commercial tool in the context of post-WWII economic growth. In the early 1940s, Haglund used "The Old Settler" as the theme song for his local radio show "where he played guitar, sang songs, and told stories of the Pacific Northwest."[75] According to Pete Seeger himself, he and Woody Guthrie taught Haglund the tune on a visit to Seattle in 1941.[76] Historian Kurt E. Armbruster establishes how, by way of his public persona and embrace of folk songs, Haglund offered a respite from current popular and commercial music "while rousing new feelings of regional identity."[77] Besides exposing many in the Northwest to folk music, Haglund extended the use of "The Old Settler" to his commercial restaurant enterprise. In 1946, Haglund opened a restaurant at his aquarium on Pier 54 in Seattle, calling it Ivar's Acres of Clams, after the shellfish which so surrounded "The Old Settler." Over a decade later, the symbolic value of "The Old Settler" was still deeply relevant. A 1960s era menu from Ivar's features lyrics from the song alongside illustrations of the eponymous character, and notes that the song "is one of [the] Pacific Northwest's richest pieces of nearly forgotten pioneer lore...the words and illustrations are here revived, for they bring the lusty, natural humor of the old settlers, and it is that spirit which is reflected in the amazing progress of this region."[78] At this time, Haglund enjoyed regional fame

[75] Pacific Northwest Folklore Society, "The Old Settler," accessed June 12, 2022, http://pnwfolklore.org/OldSettler.html.
[76] Letter from Pete Seeger to Linda Allen, 17 March 1987, box 5, folder "Pete Seeger correspondence and article 1963-1987 5/2," Linda Allen Papers, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. Seeger refers to the song as "Acres of Clams" in this letter. He also writes that he adopted the term "hootenanny" from a Seattle visit, explaining that the Washington Commonwealth Federation, a New Deal political club, used the term "hootenanny" for their monthly fundraising party. He also states that the term was possibly an old Midwestern term with French roots.
[77] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 214.
[78] Pacific Northwest Folklore Society, "The Old Settler."

and a role as a "moving spirit on the waterfront" who worked to "help preserve Seattle's colorful history and seaport tradition," as described in a 1966 feature in *The Seattle Times.*[79] His position in the community as a respected individual indicates the influence of the values he espoused and a public alignment with his particular framing of regional history.

Haglund and his restaurant were both locally revered and representative of regional place-stories tied to the land – literal "acres of clams" amid the "amazing progress" of the region facilitated by a "lusty" pioneer spirit. While communicated in an upbeat, jovial style befitting a folk musician, these were concepts that the public took seriously. Haglund's use of "The Old Settler" reveals how, as described by humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, "humble events can in time build up a strong sentiment for place." These sentiments, built on Haglund's folk affability and cozy expressions of heritage, suggest how folk songs created an "attachment of a deep though subconscious sort...simply with familiarity and ease...with the memory of sounds and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time."[80] What was more homely and unassuming than Ivar Haglund, a folk song, or a clam? This unassuming homeliness masked a more nefarious function of "The Old Settler" to exclude experiences outside the boundaries of its narrative. Regardless, the potency of the symbolic home in "The Old Settler" amplified in the post-war period. As established in Roger Sale's history of Seattle, *Seattle: Past to Present,* during wartime, "the experience of Americans became a national experience" alongside "a corresponding decline in state power and regional feeling."[81] As Haglund developed Ivar's and marketed himself

[79] Laurie Fish, "Ivar Haglund's 20 Years With the Clams," *The Seattle Times*, March 27, 1966, 39.
[80] Tuan, *Space and Place,* 18, 54.
[81] Roger Sale, *Seattle: Past to Present* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 174. Sale notes that two of the major wartime events that shaped the region were the Boeing boom and the mass internment of Japanese Americans living in the Pacific Northwest. Especially in the case of Japanese American internment, residents of Seattle and the region would have grappled with concepts of community and belonging.

on regional TV and in Seattle newspapers, "The Old Settler" became a device for re-establishing that lost regional feeling in the wake of cultural and societal change.

Through his use of "The Old Settler," Haglund deployed usable pasts and encouraged customers to spend money by capitalizing on humble Northwest stereotypes. This was achieved during a time of "amazing progress," as Haglund himself put it. On the fringes of WWII, Seattle experienced rapid and substantial growth in public education, media, transportation, and population. For example, the population of Seattle grew from 368,000 to 465,000 in the ten-year period between 1940-1950. A large portion of new residents were Black migrants who had settled in Seattle during WWII to work in defense industries. Even prior to WWII, the Northwest had seen three major periods of Asian American migration to Puget Sound, migrants who literally made the city. In *Seattle from the Margins: Exclusion, Erasure, and the Making of a Pacific Coast City,* historian Megan Asaka outlines Chinese migration from the 1860s to the 1880s, Japanese migration between the 1890s and 1910s, and Filipino migration from the 1920s to the 1930s. Asaka argues that although Asian laborers who worked alongside Indigenous and European or US-born white counterparts were essential to Seattle economy and infrastructure, they "did not fit the image of the stable factory worker." This "nonconformity to settled family life cast them as suspicious and potentially disruptive to the social order."[82] Changing population dynamics across Seattle's developing years would have added another layer of social disruption for white residents. In terms of city infrastructure, trolleys and buses replaced streetcars in Seattle in 1941, University of Washington opened a medical school in 1946, 1948 marked the first "wide-audience TV broadcast" in the Puget Sound area, the floating Lacey V. Murrow Memorial Bridge spanning Lake Washington opened in 1940, Seattle Tacoma International Airport opened in 1949, and the city of

[82] Megan Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins: Exclusion, Erasure, and the Making of a Pacific Coast City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2022), 7.

Seattle expanded its boundaries in 1954.[83] City and industry also transformed the waterways and residents' relationship to it in the pre- and post-war era. The reduction of Puget Sound's mosquito fleet ferries in the 1930s, a system of small steamships and the main means of transportation across the Sound in the previous four decades, left residents feeling that the loss of the fleet, so "part of the peculiar charm and magic of their lovely inland sea" meant that "something fine and exciting was suddenly missing."[84] Outside of the city, lumber jobs and farming in the Northwest continued to decline, leaving only small pockets of agricultural activity around Puget Sound. The changing industrial landscape, coupled with the ascent of Boeing and the expansion of shipbuilding industries in the 1930s and 1940s, "marked a profound and lasting shift away from a resource-based economy and more firmly toward manufacturing."[85] In *Seattle from the Margins,* Asaka describes how amid the subsequent diminishing reliance on a seasonal and mobile workforce, city officials cleared informal spaces (like Hooverville and Profanity Hill) occupied by migrant laborers, "single Black men and women, sex workers, female-headed households, and Asian-Indigenous mixed families."[86] In Seattle, with the clearance of Profanity Hill, the expulsion of Japanese Americans from the city, and the exclusionary policies of a new development called Yesler Terrace, marginalized groups were effectively displaced and erased to make room for the installation of a new, stationary workforce comprised of white families. Asaka describes this history of Seattle's formation, rooted in exclusionary practices, to question the characterization of Seattle as a truly "welcoming city."[87]

[83] "Seattle and King County Milestones," Historylink.org, last modified October 27, 2004, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.historylink.org/File/7110.
[84] Williams, *Homewaters,* 84. See also David B. Williams, "Mosquito Fleet," February 2, 2021, Historylink.org, https://www.historylink.org/file/869.
[85] Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins,* 137, 159.
[86] Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins,* 186.
[87] Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins,* 190.

As a symbol of Northwest history and nostalgia, "The Old Settler" provided a very discrete window of belonging. Haglund's effective use of the song as a community anthem and a marketing tool indicates the extent to which a narrative based in white, settler experience dominated the cultural space in Seattle during the second half of the 20th century. "The Old Settler," and Northwest folk music more generally, reflect one facet as to how Seattle was historically, systematically, and deeply un-welcoming for marginalized groups. Haglund's ability to mobilize the symbolic power of "The Old Settler" to generate interest in his private business revealed an adherence to a settler-colonialist narrative amid staggering growth and change. As a reaction to that which threatened the balance of white social and cultural capital, "The Old Settler" provided a convenient invocation of heritage for a specific demographic in the city. Its utility was augmented by Haglund in a new role as a commercial tool that capitalized on those ideals. According to Don Firth, a folk musician active in Seattle in the early folk music revival period, "Ivar made a *lot* of dough off that song!"[88] Haglund bridged a gap between culture and consumption and was enriched to the point that by 1976 he owned the landmark Smith Tower in downtown Seattle.[89]

As the folk music revival took hold in Seattle and the region during the 1950s and 60s, "The Old Settler" remained a popular tune that summoned the old ties to the land and place. According to Washington folksinger Carl Allen, when it came to songs like "The Old Settler" and other quintessentially Northwest folk ballads, "everyone was playing them."[90] Circa 1961, that

[88] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 216.
[89] Public opinion in regards to Haglund's ownership of the Smith Tower appeared to fall between amusement and appreciation. In 1977, he was publicly parodied for hanging a fish-shaped windsock of questionable aesthetic value from the Tower which the City of Seattle objected to. The *Seattle-Post Intelligencer* printed two satirical versions of "The Old Settler" in response to this, with lines like "Ivar has restaurants all over Seattle/You can eat there almost any hour/But the thing he is proudest of right now/Is the fact that he owns the Smith Tower." Maribeth Morris, "That Wunnerful Fish," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* November 10, 1977, 15. See also "The Old Settler," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* October 31, 1977, 16. This article sided with Haglund, who had "our sympathies in this fight/against these bureaucratic shams/we adore this salmon banner/swimming over acres of clams."
[90] Interview with Carl Allen, Seattle, WA, September 15, 2021.

included Seattle's most popular folk group, The Brothers Four, and Bing Crosby, who was born in Tacoma.[91] In 1963, the Seattle Symphony even performed "A Country They Call Puget Sound," a version of "The Old Settler" re-worked by Seattle folksinger Earl Robinson.[92] As opposed to Haglund, who had both a cultural and commercial interest in the song, folk singers of the revival period turned to historical and traditional Washington folk songs in pursuit of authenticity and human connection. Just as Francis Henry's early 20th century revision of "The Old Settler" excluded newcomers from the region, folk music continued to render a division between groups of people while articulating a sense of shared belonging among others. It is true that songs like "Roll On, Columbia," "The Old Settler," "Seattle Illahee," and "Little Old Log Cabin on my Claim" relied on and informed ideas of place within the civic imagination, often to the exclusion of those not immediately aligned with experiences of the white settler. Indeed, there are other more subtle conclusions to draw from the relationship between the songs of Washington state and attributes of geographic location, and how they operated to construct ideas of belonging and regional identity. Through variations of experience, folk musicians used folk songs to both diminish and expand place, an element that seemed so static otherwise. In this way, folk musicians believed they could transfigure place-stories to create stronger links of human connection.

Place in the Northwest Folk Music Revival

For revival era folksingers of the Pacific Northwest, folk music was both a means to remember and connect to a specific, localized place, and a bridge that transcended place and place-based identity. As a child growing up in British Columbia (BC), Rika Ruebsaat experienced folk

[91] Ivar Haglund, "There Goes Our Song Again!" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* February 22, 1961, 36. Haglund writes that when the Brothers Four "sing 'The Old Settler' they make you want to sit right up and cheer."
[92] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 214.

music in varied contexts. At home, her family "sang the songs [her] parents had brought with them from Germany as well as American songs from Burl Ives records." At summer camp, they "sang the usual repertoire," and at school they "learned primarily British and American songs." One summer, her father, a Scoutmaster in rural BC, returned from summer camp with a new version of the American folk song "The Erie Canal," reworked to celebrate a favorite camping spot alongside the Arrow Lakes. For Ruebsaat, this new song evoked a strong sense of place: the rugged beauty of the BC landscape and the sentimental memories born of her experience there. The Arrow Lakes song did more than impress Ruebsaat because it was about where she lived, or because it rendered that part of the Canadian mountain region "just as important as the Erie Canal." Instead, the song facilitated a connection to distant, unknown places. Ruebsaat stated that:

> If the Arrow Lakes is just an ordinary place where people live and work, then all those other places mentioned in all the other songs I knew must also be just ordinary places rather than the never-never lands I imagined them to be. Suddenly the world seemed a little less mysterious than it had before.[93]

In a metaphysical way, Ruebsaat understood folk music as transcendent of place, in the sense that folk songs provoked a closeness and a relation to someone else's home without ever having experienced the place personally. As entities grounded in geography, regional folk songs evoked an attachment to the place of one's home and concurrently rendered unknown places a little bit more known.[94] In this way, folk music diffused and destabilized conceptions of place. A folksinger could believe that places could be known without direct experience while maintaining a more concrete belief that, in terms of singing and writing folk songs, "if you're trying to create it

[93] Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat, published originally in *BC Music Educator* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1981). Reprinted as "Songs and a Sense of Place," jonandrika.org, accessed June 2, 2022, http://jonandrika.org/articles/songs-and-a-sense-of-place/.
[94] Interview with Rika Ruebsaat and John Bartlett, September 6, 2021. Ruebsaat's anecdote, while not situated in Washington state, is included because she and Bartlett had strong ties to the Seattle folk music community and her experience is very useful in understanding the contradictory relationship between place and folk music in the region.

without having experience, its problematic."[95] In a 1976 article in the folk music publication *Come All Ye,* Ruebsaat described the psychic disjuncture and crisis of authenticity she experienced as a "middle-class, university-educated folksinger" performing songs of "working people" for audiences were "there have been very few actual workers." This changed in 1975, after she lined up a series of performances at a pub in Fernie, BC, a small town in the Canadian Rockies comprised "of loggers and miners, with a small middle class." In this venue, Ruebsaat was, in her own words, an "imposter" with the limited potential to be received by the predominantly male audience as a "'women's libber'...as a sex object or as a threat." Ultimately, her actual experience differed from these expectations, where she "felt accepted and appreciated by the clientele, a situation which [she] attributed primarily to the nature of the songs." Ruebsaat sang about the lived experience of the people of Fernie – the associations, memories, and ideas that the audience understood and identified with. Her class or gender status, "as a performer and a woman, was totally secondary to the songs themselves." Although Ruebsaat lacked the lived experience working in the timber and mining industry expressed by her songs, she recognized how the audience appreciated the music. In her memory, the audience drew meaning, enjoyment, and identification with the folk songs about their work and town. The audience may have accepted Ruebsaat based on myriad terms. The salient point for Ruebsaat was that the music allowed her acceptance regardless of her status of a cultural and social outsider.

The realization that folk songs could be means to transcend place and experience allowed Ruebsaat to reassign validity to her own artistic practice and extract greater meaning from her performance. For example, when Ruebsaat sang "The Truckdriver's Song," she noticed heads nodding and overheard someone murmur, "'she knows what she's talking about.'" This type of

[95] Interview with Rika Ruebsaat and John Bartlett, September 6, 2021.

endorsement bolstered her role as a conduit for communicating specific experiences outside of herself. At the end of the run, Ruebsaat had had an "eye-opening experience." Through the opportunity to sing folk songs "directly in the type of environment in which so many of the Canadian folk songs...were born...[she could] now sing them with far greater understanding and conviction." She concluded that the songs had greater power than previously thought and were not "just a pleasant musical diversion for university students."[96] Ruebsaat's retelling of her experience performing for the people of Fernie is illustrative of two important points. Firstly, it shows how folk musicians believed that folk music, despite variations in identity and experience, was a bridge that transcended experiences rooted to place. For them, an outsider could enter a space divorced from their own experience and sing the songs of the people without opposition. Ruebsaat's experience in Fernie exemplifies this expansive conception of place. Secondly, the way in which Ruebsaat strengthened her practice through lived experience indicates a contraction of place, in the sense that meaning and validity were enhanced only by being in that place, at that time. While this emphasis on lived experience may appear contradictory to Ruebsaat's earlier anecdote about the Arrow Lakes song, it reveals how the variations in the folk music ethos of this period were not always in direct contradiction or opposition, but were facets that existed together, all at once.

The relationship between folk music and place-based experience echoes at a nexus of the national and local folk music revival communities. In 1969, nationally celebrated folk singer Barbara Dane travelled to a GI Coffeehouse in Tacoma, Washington. In an article for *Sing Out!,* Dane described how during her performance, the audience sat at attention, a new look spreading "over their faces" as they realized "someone was talking to them as if they mattered!"[97] Like

[96] Rika Ruebsaat, "Singing in Fernie," jonandrika.org, accessed June 2, 2022, http://jonandrika.org/wp/articles/singing-in-fernie/.
[97] Barbara Dane, "If This be Treason," *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine* 19, issue 4 (Winter 1969/70): 6

Ruebsaat in Fernie, it didn't matter that Dane wasn't a solider or a man, it was the act of communicating and confirming something fundamental to the audience that made the folk songs effective and meaningful. After the performance, "the Marines stood and cheered – not for me, or even so much for the song, as for the fact that their humanity had responded when the songs spoke to them."[98] Dane believed she could affirm the humanity and experiences of a diverse audience through the power of "all the good and real old songs."[99] In fact, Dane's ability to appeal to a group as an outsider was certainly lubricated by a number of societal and cultural factors. The association of folk music with the political Left created the correct political subtext in order to speak to an audience gathered under "posters of Malcolm X and Marilyn Monroe...Bob Dylan and Che Guevara."[100] The audience was likely primed to easily accept a performer like Dane, a political activist and white female folk singer with an appearance in line with particular markers of acceptability. An article titled "White Blues Singer: Blonde keeps blues alive" appearing in the pages of *Ebony* magazine noted the incongruity between her "startingly blonde" hair and her "dusky alto" blues voice.[101] Although Dane's sound was clearly rooted in a Black American blues tradition, whiteness enabled her popularity and acceptance among audiences like the one in Tacoma. An ideological embrace of diversity and cultural pluralism characterized the folksinger ethos during the folk music revival period and created what revival historian Gillian Mitchell called "a sense of cultural belonging, whether the desired group was their own or one to which

[98] Barbara Dane, "If This Be Treason," *Sing Out!,* 6.
[99] Ibid, 2.
[100] Ibid, 2.
[101] "White Blues Singer: Blonde keeps blues alive," *Ebony,* November 1959, 149. In another short article in the same issue, "Barbara Feels Sincerity Brings Negro Acceptance," Dane confirms her belief that in any context, "just to get up and sing and make beautiful sounds as sort of an abstract expression doesn't really mean so terribly much...but if you can also, in some way, send your audience out feeling a little closer to each other as human beings, then you've done something," 154.

they were outsiders."[102] And people, in general, want to be seen and heard, especially soldiers in a GI coffeehouse in the midst of the Vietnam War. The shared and overwhelming sense of discontent amongst a young, American demographic would have made boundaries of gender, class, birthplace, race, and other identifications significantly more permeable. However, a generic sense of cultural belonging was not enough to transcend these boundaries completely. If Dane and Ruebsaat were not aligned with values related to gender and race, which positioned them as non-threatening to the social order, they would not have been welcomed as readily into closed and exclusionary spaces like timber towns in remote British Columbia or coffee houses full of Marines. Dane and Ruebsaat believed their performances transcended divides of lived experience to generate greater human connection, yet their acceptability was informed by forces outside of their control. These variations in the connective capacity of folk music characterized the experiences of Pacific Northwest folksingers.

Conclusion

From the 19th century into the 20th, individuals in the Northwest utilized folk songs to construct place-stories. A primary collection of regional folk music, Woody Guthrie's Columbia River Ballads fortified the connection between folk music and the landscape in uneasy relationship to modernity. Guthrie's folk songs about the Pacific Northwest not only provided evocative fodder for the public imagination, celebrating the landscape as ruggedly majestic and idiosyncratically Northwest, they did so as propaganda to speed industrial progress in the region. This was an early example of the paradox of place in Washington state folk music, where folk music venerated the environment while accelerating its change. A similarly complex relationship between folk music

[102] Gillian Mitchell, *The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada, 1945-1980* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited), 67-68.

and place is evident in the symbolism and utility of "The Old Settler" song, used by folk singers, pioneer celebrants, and champions of local commerce and identity. Throughout the 20th century, "The Old Settler" bolstered a settler-colonialist narrative and claims to land. It was a potent marketing tool as much as it was a regional folky anthem during a time of rapid growth and widening gaps in social and economic opportunity. This context of instability and uneasy attitudes towards progress made the symbolism of "The Old Settler" doubly effective as a reinforcer of long-held norms and markers of Northwest identity. Ivar Haglund's use of the song indicates how an historical narrative based in white, settler experience dominated the cultural space in Seattle, underscoring a legacy of exclusion and displacement in the city. During the 1960s, folk musicians like Rika Ruebsaat and Barbara Dane believed that folk music corrected this kind of exclusion by strengthening connections within a community and bridging divisions of gender, race, and lived experiences. In reality, gender and race influenced folk musicians' ability to transcend these boundaries. In general, this meant that white folk musicians experienced ease at entering communities as outsiders because they posed little threat to the established social order. Folk music of the Northwest, so rooted to place, provided what Yi-Fu Tuan called "an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present" which was "reassuring to man...who sees frailty in himself and chance and flux everywhere."[103] Through evocations of place, folk music created space for some but not all, a "calm center of established values" in reaction to frailty and flux. Nonetheless, this was rickety scaffolding, a dirty mirror reflecting a changeable image that rendered connections between people and to heritage volatile. Building on these concepts, the following chapter analyzes the individuals and practices of folk music communities in the Pacific Northwest during the revival period, specifically in Bellingham and Seattle. It peers more closely

[103] Tuan, *Space and Place,* 154.

at their reactions to social and cultural instability within the region, the formation of folk music communities and their ability to create moments and networks of human connection.

Chapter 2

The Human Connection: Folk Music Communities in Seattle and Bellingham

> You know, it was still a statement about changing the world, a real clear, strong statement about changing the world, and it led a lot of us into the older music, the "real" folk music.
>
> – Flip Breskin[104]

> It seems that the poems and the songs of protest and liberation are always too late or too early: memory or dream.
>
> – Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation*[105]

In the late 1970s, folk musicians began drawing together under the "quarter-sawn oak trim, pastoral murals, and period fixtures and furnishings" of the historic Roeder Home in Bellingham, Washington.[106] In front of the fireplace, Bellingham residents gathered for folk music performances and jam sessions, and to sing and share folk songs as part of the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society (WCHMS). In this place, feelings of acceptance were "immediate" and no one was ever ousted for lack of skill or inability to perform. For Northwest folk musicians, the WCHMS provided space to connect to and build community through folk music, where "if it wasn't for what [went] on at the Roeder Home" many individuals wouldn't have been involved in playing music at all and certainly "not as well as [they did]."[107] Throughout the late 1960s and into the 1980s, the WCHMS, and Seattle's folk music non-profit the Seattle Folklore Society (SFS), were not only hubs to meet like-minded individuals and improve one's guitar skill under cozy dim lighting in homely interiors. Folk music groups were sites driven by ideologies of higher purpose, where individuals focused on creating new avenues for connection and community.

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[104] "Flip Breskin oral history," 21 November 2005, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, https://mabel.wwu.edu/islandora/object/wwu%3A918.
[105] Herbert Marcuse, "An Essay on Liberation," 1969, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/marcuse/works/1969/essay-liberation.htm.
[106] "Roeder Home," Whatcom County Washington, accessed January 18, 2023, https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3008/Roeder-Home. Victor Roeder was a Bellingham businessman and son of Bellingham's founder Captain Henry Roeder. Construction on his home began in 1903 and was completed in 1908.
[107] "Rob Lopresti and Terri Weiner oral history," 5 March 2007, 12-22, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, https://mabel.wwu.edu/islandora/object/wwu%3A920.

Through a history and analysis of the activities of Seattle and Bellingham folk music communities, and a reliance on oral histories as primary sources, this chapter centers lived experience. It points to how small-scale human networks interacted to transmit ideas of place, belonging, and identity in Washington state during the 1970s and 80s. This chapter investigates how folk musicians of the Pacific Northwest founded and developed folk music communities based on the ideals of the folk music revival while responding to regional change. At the heart of these communities was an ardent desire for human connection, a reaction to local cultural shifts that fueled sentiments of alienation. Narratives of the American folk music revival often terminate in the mid to late 1960s with the decline of commercially viable folk music; however, this chapter reveals a lasting adherence to folk music ideology and a continuation of folk music practice into the 1970s and 80s. This periodization offers a longer view into the folk music revival period and provides insight into what aspects of folk music ideology had the strongest staying power into subsequent decades.[108] Although Seattle and Bellingham were geographically separate from the American folk music epicenter of New York City, Northwest folk music communities cross-pollinated with their northern and southern neighbors from British Columbia to San Francisco to form a folk music matrix that extended through the region. The experiences of individuals within Northwest folk music communities were nonetheless informed by the unique histories and the specific character of this region. Through folk music practice, and in response to regional concerns of societal instability, individuals reformulated folk culture to shape new communities. Folk musicians of Bellingham and Seattle were successful in many respects in creating avenues of

[108] As noted in the Introduction, in *Romancing the Folk,* Filene argues that Dylan's shift away from folk standards to "drawing on American roots music to produce vibrant new songs grounded firmly in tradition" represented a "transmutation, not an abdication, of his folk-stylist role...[an] evolution within the folk process." Dylan's stylistic evolution demonstrated that "even angry change could at the same time be evolutionary and firmly rooted," 215, 217, 232. In this vein, this chapter argues that an evolutionary framework is beneficial in understanding folk music culture of this time, as opposed to a finality at the end of the 1960s.

connection between divided communities. Out of developing folk music communities grew relationships that influenced the qualities of folk music sound and practice in the region. However, constructions of authenticity and boundaries of inclusion restricted their impact, which wavered in the face of deeply formed systems of division and discrimination. Northwest folkies could not have achieved the expansive kinds of societal transformation and cohesion promised by folk music ideology, but they succeeded in forming communities that were meaningful to those who lived to experience them.

A Changing Pacific Northwest

During the 1970s, Washington state underwent substantial industrial and environmental change that radically altered the physical landscape. Railroads abandoned lines, federal and state entities dammed rivers to the point that no prime hydropower spots remained, and numerous towns whose economy was based on salmon canning or lumber deteriorated or disappeared completely. Along the celebrated Columbia River, where "sawmills and logging operations once were located every few miles, less than a half dozen remained by 1981."[109] The fishing industry was another site where drastic changes took place. In 1974, United States District Court Judge George H. Boldt ruled that Washington state had violated treaties and discriminated against Coast Salish tribes, establishing that tribes were entitled to one-half of the annual catch. This landmark case, known as the Boldt Decision, restructured the fishing industry by partially reinstating tribal fishing rights. It shifted a long-standing balance of power which incited non-Native commercial and recreational fishing communities, in addition to some state officials, who saw the ruling as unfair and threatening to their livelihood. Along the Puget Sound, the Boldt Decision contributed to anxieties

[109] John M. McClelland, Jr. "Our Pleasant Condition, Surrounded by Fewer Acres of Clams," in *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest,* 216. The author notes that circa 1983, Astoria, OR, which "once had 24 canneries" then had two.

and vulnerabilities among non-Native groups, who understood that the ruling undermined their claims to land and resources during a time when the industry was already experiencing declines in both profit and fish population.[110] Further changes in the public relationship to Seattle's marine space occurred along the city's waterfront. Although the construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct in the 1950s effectively severed downtown Seattle from its shoreline, the city initiated new construction along the waterfront in the early 1960s – including the Edgewater Hotel and Ye Olde Curiosity Shop – to reinvigorate the area for pedestrians and attract tourists to the water's edge.[111] Development plans also included changes to existing parks, and the creation of new ones. In the 1970s city planners moved and dumped thousands of cubic yards of fill dirt to construct a 2,900-foot seawall in Seahurst Park. The alteration of this stretch of shoreline narrowed the beach and degraded natural habitats in favor of creating a public park more easily accessible by car.[112] In 1974, the City of Seattle dedicated a new urban park, Waterfront Park, which included an 1,800 promenade along Alaskan Way, integrated retail spaces, and an aquarium bordered by public access viewpoints. A little over a decade later, a new development plan described Waterfront Park as an underutilized asset "shut off from the surrounding neighborhood."[113] The modifications to the region's shorelines signaled a new kind of experience with and relationship to the landscape, where planners and some members of the public favored convenience and consumption over preservation of place. Not all Northwest residents took these changes in stride.

Environmental and industrial changes affected communities and residents regionally, and shifted the character of Washington state away from the foundational conceptions of Pacific

[110] Williams, *Homewaters*, 141-142.
[111] Jennifer Ott, "Shaping Seattle's Central Waterfront, Part 2: From 'Back Alley' to 'Front Porch,'" November 13, 2013, Historylink.org, https://www.historylink.org/File/10666.
[112] Williams, *Homewaters,* 18.
[113] Ott, "Shaping Seattle's Central Waterfront."

Northwestern experience to something more closely resembling a nonspecific, suburban America. Local newspapers and alternative weeklies debated the issues and anxieties surrounding this perceived loss of place. For example, a 1978 article in the *Northwest Passage* examined the influence of shopping malls on local communities, arguing that the modern mall exemplified contemporary consumerism divorced from a smaller scale, more natural, and implicitly better, social system. The author bemoaned the loss of traditional town squares and framed malls as a "fantasy world – no dirt, no traffic, and no weather – where the shopper wanders in a consumptive stupor through the carefully planned environment, designed to part people painlessly from their money."[114] To this author, the mall was a newfangled, contemporary center of social and economic life that lacked crucial qualities of human interaction and proximity to untouched nature. In the same issue, *Northwest Passage* included multiple reports related to environmentalist concerns, ranging from protests against the Trident nuclear submarine base on the Kitsap Peninsula to outrage over the capture of Northwest orcas for display at Sea World in California.

It is no coincidence that interest in traditional folk music practices, explicitly tied to a better-seeming past and an unspoiled environment, expanded in tandem with these debates over the use of resources and the changing character of the region. One *Northwest Passage* article favorably linked the folk music of the Pacific Northwest, while a "fairly young" music tradition, to "the pioneer lifestyle" present "around the turn of the century." The author remarked that the revitalization of folk music in Seattle during the early 1970s was in part due to the opening of the Inside Passage, a folk music tavern "reminiscent of earlier times."[115] The attraction to folk music during the 1970s was a direct reaction to dramatic changes in social and economic life in the region,

[114] Tom Clingman, "Getting Malled in Olympia: the Developers Move In, *Northwest Passage* 18, no. 2, May 23 - June 12, 1978, 4.
[115] Frank Ferrel, "Folk Music... Alive & Well," *Northwest Passage* 18, no. 2, May 23 - June 12, 1978, 21.

and a renewed interest in folk traditions suggested and reinforced unstable relationships to modernity. For example, a *Northwest Passage* article from 1977 indicated attitudes of discomfort among folk musicians who drew a distinction between older, and thereby better, forms of folk music, and newer, more artificial reproductions. Dependent on constructions of authenticity tied to rural lifestyles and American folk traditions of the South, the author described the difference between "an earnest young man with a beat-up guitar warbling 'Michael, Row the Boat Ashore' in a coffeehouse...[and] folk (or traditional) music" which "encompasses a rich heritage of styles...music that expresses simply but forcefully the joys and sorrows of people as they face everyday life."[116] To the author, only the latter represented an authentic artistic and cultural form based in "a rich heritage." By casting traditional folk music, expressions from average "everyday" people, in opposition to the figure of the young folk music revivalist, the author rejected modern forms in favor of those from the past.

Folk musicians during the revival period, as described by Robert Cantwell in *If Beale Street Could Talk,* believed that authentic "folk culture, understood as a survivor from a more elegant and innocent, but above all more refined and respectable, past, might be a bulwark against [modernity]."[117] For folk musicians of the Northwest, a renewed interest in folk traditions was based in nostalgic constructions of the past. According to historian Leslie Anne Hadfield, as an instrument for analysis, nostalgia uncovers "what people long for in the present...for the social order...[that] they see missing in contemporary society."[118] For some folk musicians of this period, nostalgia for the "pioneer lifestyle" represented an appealing narrative of simpler times and a

[116] Doug Honig, "A New Folk Center?" *Northwest Passage* 16, no. 12*,* August 1-21, 1977, 19.
[117] Robert Cantwell, *If Beale Street Could Talk: Music, Community, Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008)*,* 77.
[118] Leslie Anne Hadfield, "Can We Believe the Stories about Biko? Oral Sources, Meaning, and Emotion in South African Struggle History," *History in Africa* 42, (2015): 239-269; esp. 255.

defense against turbulent changes in local culture and the environment. Building a community with this scaffolding could insulate a group from threats "to the cultural hegemony of the Anglo-American middle class."[119] In fact, historians of the Pacific Northwest region have defined the "tension between the classic and counter-classic," the old and the new, the historical and the modern, as a defining characteristic of Pacific Northwest regionalism of the 1970s and 80s.[120] And yet, music communities of the Northwest were not characterized solely by a desire to revert to some heyday of racial or social hierarchy signified by nostalgia. Instead, folk musicians of this period called for an excavation of traditional practices unearthed from a shared past, a return to substance achieved by facilitating a broad sense of human connection and intimacy.

Folk music communities longed for and cultivated human connection across planes of geography and lived experience. Individuals responded to dislocation and disconnection by forming communities committed to fostering closeness and destabilizing social and racial barriers. To some extent a continuation of 1960s counterculture and activism, these communities were influenced by a perceived disconnection from "traditional" community forms in modern life and responded to these anxieties by returning to folk music tenets of participation and inclusion. While new folk music communities influenced the character of the region, their practices were constrained by limits of ideology and the strength of long-held systems of discrimination in the region.

Seattle Folk Music Stories

[119] Cantwell, *If Beale Street Could Talk,* 77.
[120] Richard Maxwell Brown, "The New Regionalism in America, 1970-1981," in *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest*, 37-96; esp. 64. Brown also describes the individual quest for identity in terms of the region and the symbiosis of art, architecture, literature, and history with the natural environment as two of three themes of regionalism of this period.

During the mid-20th century, Seattle, like many American cities, was recovering from rapid growth and responding to civil unrest. As discussed previously, Seattle's urban infrastructure, economy, population, and educational systems expanded enormously in the post-WWII era. Both the abundance of the 1950s and the instability of change defined the upbringing of the baby boom generation. The Vietnam war, Cold War threats, persecution of supposed Communist groups, and revolutionary racial and civil rights battles compounded American anxieties nationally and contributed to a dark national mood. Though the 1962 Seattle World's Fair had provided an optimistic beginning to the start of a new decade, racial and social turbulence defined the city. In Seattle, civil rights efforts occurred in parallel to the national movement and in response to local concerns.

From its earliest days, Seattle was a harshly segregated city where white supremacy dominated the social, cultural, and economic landscape. Like other states in the Western United States, a system of racial discrimination "targeted not just African Americans but also Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, people of Mexican ancestry, and also, at times, Jews." [121] In *The Forging of a Black Community,* historian Quintard Taylor describes the transformation of Seattle's Central District leading up to the direct action campaigns undertaken by Black Seattleites during the 1960s in response to decades of widespread discrimination.[122] Concentrations of Black residents in substandard Central District housing existed before WWII, but increased significantly during and directly after the war. During WWII, over 45,000 African

[121] "Segregated Seattle," The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, University of Washington, accessed February 7, 2023, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm. The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project has extensive resources that unpack a long history of racism and discrimination in Seattle and Washington state towards all named groups. Megan Asaka's *Seattle from the Margins: Exclusion, Erasure, and the Making of a Pacific Coast City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2022) is another valuable history which documents the exclusion of and discrimination towards marginalized groups in the Puget Sound region.
[122] Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

Americans migrated to the region to work in defense industries, contributing to an increase of 413% in Black residents between 1940 and 1950.[123] In the postwar period, racist housing covenants in the city restricted where Black Seattleites could live and contributed to overcrowding in the Central District. These covenants, which were agreements between homeowners and realtors to restrict renting and selling to African Americans, formalized residential segregation in the city and widened gaps of economic disparity. For example, in 1945, over 10,000 Black residents occupied the same buildings in the Central District that had housed 3,700 people only five years earlier.[124] These overcrowded, substandard housing units were the only affordable option for most of Seattle's Black population. Overcrowding and segregation in housing relegated many Black residents to invisibility, contributed to deteriorating living conditions, and exacerbated poverty that increased socioeconomic distance between white and black communities. Even when racially based housing covenants no longer existed, the legacies of this practice continued to constrain Black residence to the Central District. Although a 1890 equal accommodation law had legally established Washington as one of the few non-segregated states in the Union, Black Seattleites up into the mid 20th century were nonetheless restricted from residence in most Seattle neighborhoods and barred from hotels, dance halls, and restaurants.[125] In the 1960s, concerns over civil rights violations, in particular school segregation and job discrimination, encouraged members of Seattle's Black community to mount civil rights campaigns as "part of a national effort to eradicate racism, empower African Americans, and achieve the full and final democratization of the United States."[126] Taylor argues that activists succeeded in the end of the 1960s to build a community in the Central District free from white psychological and economic control, and also points out how

[123] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 159.
[124] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 169, 179.
[125] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 91.
[126] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 190.

white antipathy and anxieties towards the Black community were masked by a public image of Seattle as a liberal, color-blind city.[127] The racial and economic division between communities, which according to historian Megan Asaka "shows the layers of colonialism and racism that were woven into the city's foundations," would influence Northwest folk musicians during this period to connect across racial lines.[128]

Social and cultural shifts spurred by socioeconomic unrest and city development continued well into the 1970s. In *Before Seattle Rocked,* Kurt Armbruster establishes how Seattle was supposedly "shaken out of her long, insular complacency" by the exposure of corruption in the county prosecutor's office, a police payoff scandal, and a mounting recognition of "racism and economic discrimination in what had long been thought an island of tolerance."[129] Within a national economic crisis, Seattle experienced its own economic downtown when Boeing laid off more than 60 percent of its workforce by the end of 1971. Because Boeing was the region's largest employer, the layoffs created soaring unemployment rates in Washington state. Subsequently, housing prices declined, local businesses patronage waned, and birth rates fell while suicide rates rose.[130] According to Roger Sale in *Seattle: Past to Present,* the states of change that characterized the city in the postwar period compelled "many people to feel cut off from the past and want to cling, however simply or falsely, to some image of what once was."[131] Evidence of resistance to development in the city lay in the passing of the 1971 Market initiative, which worked to protect Pike Place Market from developers and preserve "not just fruit and vegetable stands...but a way of life." This was an expression of "the old populist feeling...that on the edge of the new frontier was

[127] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 193.
[128] Asaka, *Seattle from the Margins,* 11.
[129] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 304.
[130] Alan J. Stein, "Boeing Bust (1969-1971)," December 19, 2021, Historylink.org, https://www.historylink.org/file/20923.
[131] Sale, *Seattle: Past to Present*, viii. Sale describes the postwar disaffection of Seattle youth, who he claims displayed "no sense of street or meeting place...no sense of Seattle as a city," 192.

the past."[132] A Friends of the Market notice of public hearing compelled Seattle citizens to attend the meeting "in the name of common decency, and the tradition and heritage of our region" to contribute to a "last chance to save the Pike Place Market."[133] The same desire to preserve shared heritage in Seattle through folk song, and the use of Pike Place Market as a useful symbol, appeared in the 1976 folk song "Pike Place Blues" by Eric Park. Published in *The Rainy Day Songbook,* "Pike Place Blues" celebrated the "colorful bins of fresh vegetables, quaint shops, and crafts vendors" that made Pike Place Market "one of the few places one can see the urban market as it used to be."[134] In invoking the atmosphere of the market's colorful vendors, wholesome produce and "sweet music" played in the street where everyone was "wearing their dancing shoes," Park positions Pike Place Market as an essential urban gathering place worthy of preservation. The compulsion to reach into the past to extract what was considered to be essential culture also informed the revival of downtown Seattle's Pioneer Square, which "like the Market initiative...had its roots in an appreciation of something old" and reminded Seattle entrepreneurs, consumers and citizens that "Seattle was old enough to have a past that could be used and re-used."[135] Outside of the city, similar regional anxieties surrounding changes in landscape and place materialized in new folk songs. "Skagit Valley Forever," a 1970 original tune by California-based folksinger Malvina Reynolds, lamented the encroachment of urban industrial interests into "our sweet country" and protested the potential selling of Skagit Valley land to "run the Coca Cola coolers in Seattle,

[132] Sale, *Seattle: Past to Present,* 226-227.
[133] "Last Chance to Save the Pike Place Market," Friends of the Market, Notice of public hearing 1969, accessed June 12, 2022, https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/online-exhibits/pike-place-market-centennial#:~:text=The%20Pike%20Place%20Market%20Historical,architectural%20modifications%20in%20the%20Market.
[134] Linda Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book* (Bellingham: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1978), 54.
[135] Sale, *Seattle: Past to Present,* 239.

U.S.A."[136] A parallel reaction to industrial land grabs appears in a 1970s era version of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," re-worked (rather clumsily) to:

> Nuke plant, nuke plant, the latest trend,
> There's no way you can be my friend.
> You're so dangerous and costly, too,
> When, tell me, when, will you be through?
> Satsop, satsop, it must stop,
> Before our earth becomes a flop![137]

Protesters sang this song at demonstrations, unsuccessfully, against the construction of the Satsop Nuclear Power Plant in Grays Harbor County, WA. In an echo of Francis Henry's early 20th century revision of "The Old Settler," folk musicians of the revival period believed that increasing technology and progress did not mean immediate improvement in the lives of regional residents. Ironically, they were responding to the kind of progress Woody Guthrie campaigned for in his Columbia River Ballads. As Linda Allen states in the Washington songbook *Washington Songs and Lore,* "with progress comes change...[and] that change is not always for the better."[138] This was the context, where regional change piqued public interest in preserving the region's past and landscape, in which folk musicians had become increasingly organized. Only a few years prior in 1966, Seattle folk musicians John Ullman and Phil Williams incorporated the Seattle Folklore Society (SFS) as a non-profit, membership corporation.[139]

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[136] Linda Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 21.
[137] Linda Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 20.
[138] Linda Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 118.
[139] The SFS was not the first folk music organization in Seattle. Walt Robertson, one of Seattle's most well-known folk singers, founded the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society (PNWFS) in 1953. The PNWFS centered folk music as "the music of the people," which "besides giving pleasure to both songster and listener," served "to help us understand our heritage and our contemporaries." The PNWFS was also devoted to the collection and preservation of regional folklore and folk music, as they believed "the people of the Pacific Northwest are heir to a rich heritage of legend, song, dance, and other forms of lore...[and their] study greatly aids the understanding not only of ourselves, but of our forebears and the land from which they sprung." "The Model United Nations Association in Conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Presents 'An Evening of Folk Music,'" October 26-27, 1962, accessed December 12, 2022, https://t.ly/J4_h. During the Red Scare, when Pete Seeger was branded a Communist and folk musicians were guilty by association, the Seattle folk music scene entered a quieter period of smaller house concerts and informal "hoots." After a time, folk music clubs and coffeehouses propagated in Seattle,

The SFS began as a vehicle to enhance local folk music culture and draw connections between communities by bringing nationally known folk, blues and roots musicians to Seattle. It also began because of vehicles: former Reed College students John Ullman and Irene Namkung "got tired of driving to Portland" in order to see "great folk singer[s]."[140] In fact, prior to living in Seattle, the couple, who would later marry, worked to bring "traditional music, musicians, particularly like blues players from the deep South up to perform in Portland" as students at Reed College in the early 60s.[141] After relocating to Seattle, they no longer wanted to drive back down to Portland to hear the things that were being brought to Reed, and decided to attempt to bring performers to Seattle.[142] Unlike the earlier Pacific Northwest Folklore Society, which favored local folk singers "influenced by the Anglo-American ballad tradition" and musicians from around the world whose songs elicited "a kinship with many people in many lands," the SFS was not concerned with the preservation of European-style folk music or the celebration of local talent. The SFS was motivated to expose Southern "traditional" and "roots" musicians to local audiences.[143] To this point, SFS organizers relied on folk music authenticity which privileged music from the American South. The SFS intentionally decided to not feature local performers in their concert series, stating in a 1969 blurb in *Sing Out!* that "although our membership includes many talented musicians, we have restricted our use of local talent and limited ourselves to presenting ethnic musicians in small concerts." The feature notes that in the 1968-69 year the SFS

namely The Chalet, The Place Next Door, Pamir Espresso House and El Matador. Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 287.

[140] Paul de Barros, "Still folky, after all these years: Seattle Folklore Society turns 40," *The Seattle Times*, November 13, 2006.

[141] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. According to Namkung, this would've been circa 1962-65.

[142] Irene Namkung; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.

[143] "The Model United Nations Association in Conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Folklore Society Presents 'An Evening of Folk Music,'" October 26-27, 1962, accessed December 12, 2022, http://pnwfolklore.org/PNWFSArchives/pages/EveningOfFolkMusicProgram.htm.

hosted Mance Lipscomb, Ralph Stanley and Jesse Fuller, with plans to host Roscoe Holcomb and Lightnin' Hopkins in the following year – artists representative of Southern bluegrass and blues traditions.[144] For SFS-era folk musicians and organizers, Southern roots music represented an appealing tradition which symbolized a seemingly simpler and purer American lifestyle.[145] Interestingly, the push to bring national talent to Seattle was done under somewhat strict constraints in terms of performance and audience. SFS organizers espoused a view in the pages of *Sing Out!* that "the consensus of our members is that festivals are an unsuitable medium for ethnic music," insisting on the importance of smaller, intimate concert experiences.[146] For SFS folkies, this ensured that essential qualities of the folk music experience – intimacy and human connection – could be facilitated and enjoyed. This approach centered an understanding of authenticity informed by a specific, if somewhat contradictory, ideology. After the earlier folk music scene in Seattle became commercialized alongside the national folk music movement in the early 1960s, the Seattle Folklore Society formed as a kind of antidote to commercialism and consumerism.[147] For SFS folkies, authenticity and commercial folk music were mutually exclusive. The conception of true cultural or musical authenticity, as tied to non-commercial Southern blues and bluegrass traditions, underscored SFS members limited perspective of American folk music, although this would later change. The approach to feature only non-local musicians in SFS concerts also undercut the ideology so celebrant of intimacy and connection, as it was, by design, exclusive. By delineating the suitability of "ethnic" music for widespread exposure, choosing to feature acts based on subjective ideals of authenticity, and by acting as arbiters of culture, SFS members formulated boundaries and constraints around their own potential impact. The adherence to

[144] "An Incomplete List of Folk Clubs and Societies," *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine* 19 (Winter 1969/70): 21.
[145] This concept is discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.
[146] "An Incomplete List of Folk Clubs and Societies," *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine.*
[147] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 287.

authenticity in folk music persisted into the late 1970s and beyond in the Pacific Northwest. Circa 1977, regional alternative weeklies like the *Northwest Passage* continued to promote folk music concerts as an antidote to modern dislocation, capable of embodying "a special warmth, a certain rapport that breaks through the usual boundaries between audience and performer." SFS leader John Ullman underlined this concept and espoused the role of folk music as "active recreation" as opposed to "passive entertainment," another crucial element in achieving maximum connection.[148]

Although early SFS organizers were committed to bringing what they saw as nationally based, authentic folk music to Pacific Northwest audiences, they relied heavily on regional and local networks to achieve their goals. The interchange between the Reed College community and Seattle folk musicians suggests a regional, West Coast matrix of folk music communities and illustrates a mechanism of cross-pollination of ideas and practices.[149] Their initial involvement in the Portland folk music scene inspired Ullman and Namkung to initiate the creation of the SFS. Additionally, it allowed them to meet and build personal and professional relationships with two other Seattle based folk musicians significant to the Seattle folk music story: Phil and Vivian Williams.[150] These types of personal connections formed the basis of the organization. Not only did friendship solidify communal bonds, but individuals played an important role in inviting featured artists. SFS members "would have their pet project, the musician that they were really interested in, and so they would work to bring them and be the lead...that's how we got all the variety, these were the people that inspired them." For Irene Namkung, "that's why [featured performers] weren't necessarily local" – they were too busy bringing their favorite nationally

[148] Doug Honig, "A New Folk Center?" 19.
[149] Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. In addition to their work in Seattle, Namkung and Ullman founded folk music societies in Portland, Eugene, Corvallis.
[150] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021. Chapter three will discuss how Phil Williams conceptualized and worked to create the Northwest Folklife from its earliest days. Vivian Williams, who would build a life around fiddling and folk music, found her interest in folk music after discovering Pete Seeger as a Reed College student, and was friendly with Namkung and Ullman through Phil William's brother at Reed.

famous acts to Seattle.[151] Without the individual action of SFS members, motivated by the desire for human connection, folk and blues performers from across the country likely would not have performed in the city. To this end, the SFS maintained ties to a regional and local network that sought to advance national folk music networks in their "search for real and human values."[152] SFS organizers strategically utilized folk music forms to engage with traditions of the past and remediate social issues specific to their city. The SFS's attempt to create new connections to Seattle's Black community put folk music ideology into practice, generating short-lived opportunities to bridge the cultural and racial divide in Seattle.

Race and Folk Music in Seattle

As national race relations fractured and the Black Power movement gained momentum nationally, the summer of 1968 in Seattle grew tumultuous. Not only was the local economy strained, but conflicts in this racially segregated city approached a breaking point. In the Central District, "police helicopters circled...night after night and huge squadrons of police cars were parked...[while] groups of Black Panthers drilled in the Madrona playfield."[153] The situation in the CD caused sentiments of disorientation and futility among "many people throughout the city" as they "began reacting as if to catastrophe, often without any clear sense of what the catastrophe was,

[151] Irene Namkung; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[152] Rachel Clare Donaldson, *I Hear America Singing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 160. Donaldson argues that in the wake of 1960s "factionalism," or the splintering of Civil Rights movement and the division of "the New Left along fault lines of its own," efforts to reform the nation "became almost obsolete as young activists carved out their own identities and eschewed any connection to a national body. Amid this factionalism, and what appeared to be the end of progressive Americanism, multiculturalism, a movement based on updated concepts of cultural democracy emerged," 159-160. The Portland/Seattle folk music communities were not without their breaking points, impossible to avoid for any sized group of human beings. Bill Murlin described "little divisions along the way," interview with Bill Murlin, September 1, 2021. The activities of the SFS in Seattle contradict the idea that young, politically conscious Americans rejected "any connection to a national body" at this time.
[153] Sale, *Seattle: Past to Present,* 216-217.

what had caused it, what they could do about it."[154] For Black Seattleites and allied activists, the origins of the "catastrophe" were clear enough to direct the launch of numerous civil rights campaigns, including school boycotts to end segregation and demonstrations to expose discriminatory housing and employment practices. Seattle Black Panthers suppressed random violence in the Central District and established "a free medical clinic, prison visitation programs, a statewide sickle-cell anemia testing program, tutoring programs, and a free breakfast program for impoverished children."[155] Historian Quintard Taylor argues that these efforts "demolished decades-old barriers to opportunity and equality throughout the city, [but] simply demolishing barriers would not ensure equality or opportunity."[156] Taylor describes how forces situated against Black aspirations, including the antipathy and apathy of Seattle's white population, outweighed the efforts to create equality and opportunity for Black residents. For SFS organizers, racial conflicts and demonstrations in the city were not met with apathy but stimulated a new approach to create links between disparate communities through folk music. Whereas SFS concerts before 1967 were held in typically white venues, the SFS recontextualized their concert series in an effort to appeal to a local, Black audience. Both folk music revival era tenets of authenticity and a broader desire to amend divisions of race in their city informed the SFS's effort.

SFS organizers selected October 21, 1967 as the date for a performance by blues guitarist Lightnin' Hopkins in Seattle. Held at Seattle's Washington Hall, it was the first SFS-organized concert in the Central District. Generally, the SFS hosted shows at the Friends Center near the University of Washington campus, a venue they considered to be a "white people's hall."[157] This

[154] Sale, *Seattle: Past to Present,* 216-217.
[155] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 221.
[156] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 233.
[157] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. This section relies heavily on the recounting of SFS organizers John Ullman, with some information from Irene Namkung and Vivian Williams. Little archival evidence exists outside of these first-person testimonies and it is important to acknowledge this is a type of archival silence where the historical record reflects experience reliant on individual memories. It is

show, which signaled a change in method for the SFS, was a conscious effort to "contextualize" the music so that "it would be...what it might have been like in some lounge down in the fifth ward in Houston."[158] In other words, for Ullman, part of the rationale to host Hopkins away from city's white folk music center was to maintain the authenticity of the artist and his performance. The SFS intended to transpose or recreate the sense of place that Hopkins' music evoked, shifting the context of the performance away from a white audience to cater to one more closely resembling Hopkin's performances in Houston. Which isn't to say the University District lacked a Black student presence. During this time, Black students were on the verge of forming the first Black Student Union at UW, an organization that later, according to the Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, "helped reshape educational opportunities for young people of color in Seattle and throughout Washington state."[159] Within a year of the BSU's establishment and following action campaigns to demand changes to admission policies, the number of Black students at UW tripled. Despite the presence of Black students within the UW community and in close proximity to the Friends Center, SFS organizers chose Washington Hall as the most appropriate venue. The rationale behind the venue choice reveals both the racial dynamics in the city at the time, which was deeply segregated and discriminatory, and individual attitudes towards race within the Seattle folk music community. Ullman described Washington Hall as situated

> just a block or two north of 14th and Yesler...[which] was the place where drug dealers and sex workers hung out, it was a disreputable intersection and it was you know, it was one of those things where people say, "well 14th and Yesler," [and] everybody would know what they meant.

worth mentioning that this analysis does not center Black voices or experiences from the Black community at the time.

[158] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung John Ullman, September 24, 2021.

[159] "The Black Student Union at UW," The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, accessed February 7, 2023, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/BSU_intro.htm.

SFS organizers decided that this "iconic bad neighborhood" would be the ideal site to "put the show.... and people didn't like it that we did that."[160] The fact that some SFS folk musicians had a vocal aversion to the CD indicates the insularity of the community and the degree to which some members resisted change and integration. It also reveals Seattle's segregated housing demographics and the lasting impact of redlining policies, where if one went "six blocks up the hill" from a lower income neighborhood, "you [would] get the most expensive housing."[161] Surely, attitudes towards the CD varied greatly between Seattle residents who lived outside of the area and Black residents who worked and lived in the neighborhood. The SFS's choice to situate Hopkin's show at the nexus of a "disreputable intersection," and the reaction to it, exposes ideas and realities of race in Seattle. Bleakly, for members of the SFS, the closest approximation to a Houston lounge where Black Seattleites lived in highest density was known as an "iconic bad neighborhood." This characterization reflects the degree of racial segregation and social economic disparity of the time in Seattle, and the sentiments of separation between white and Black residents. The classification of the CD as merely a "bad neighborhood" that white SFS members objected to obscures the lived experiences of Black residents, for whom the CD would've been a site of community, resistance, and efforts to end discrimination in the city. To members of the SFS, Washington Hall represented a site far-removed from the "very clean" Friends Center because it was indeed culturally, racially, and economically distant. The SFS believed that this is what made it the perfect venue to speak "across racial and cultural lines" and change "people's minds."

SFS organizers' motivation to host a Southern roots artist in a Black neighborhood was done as much to maintain the pervasive folk ideology of authenticity as it was to initiate connections to and within a new audience. Ullman believed that for "most of the black

[160] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[161] Irene Namkung; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.

community...music was sort of something they wanted to forget...[because] Black people had fled the south to Seattle and didn't want to be reminded" of personal and generational trauma, there were nonetheless Black Southern migrants in Seattle who had a personal connection to Lightnin' Hopkins.[162] Ullman's assertion that their music was something Seattle's Black community "wanted to forget" was only partially true and reveals the edges of his perspective. For example, during a period of heavy migration between 1940 and 1950, new Black migrants brought African American style blues, bebop and R&B into the city and contributed significantly to a Black Seattle music scene.[163] In any case, the SFS did succeed in connecting Black Seattleites with kith and kin through the medium of music. Some ticket holders, of which there were over a thousand, "brought a family photo album, a big thick album...[that] had pictures of Lightnin's relatives in it, so they sat down with Lightnin', [saying] 'you know, here's your cousin so-and-so and stuff.'"[164] To a degree, the SFS was successful in fostering intimate human connection by hosting Hopkins in a community where he had personal ties. If Hopkins had been hosted at the Friends Center, where there was typically just "one black face in the audience," relatives and friends of Hopkins' likely would not have attended.[165] In the memories of attendees, the concert also represented a kind of racial utopia, where individuals of different races were "shoulder to shoulder, Asians whites, blacks, whatever" and where "people were just happy, it was like, better than drugs."[166] The positive memories of attendees provides evidence to the depth to which SFS members believed their work to be a success,

[162] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. Ullman is referencing the blues tradition, where songs often originated from enslaved individuals on American plantations. This is a relevant point about the power of folk music in relation to forgetting and nostalgia, and Ullman notes a parallel with Jewish survivors of the Holocaust: the music of home was "something they wanted to forget," because of its ability to evoke painful memories.
[163] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 270-271.
[164] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[165] John Ullman in Paul Dorpat, "John Ullman on the Lightning Hopkins Concert."
[166] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. Ullman believed their approach was "ahead of the curve."

"another sort of chink in the armor of racism" by showcasing folk culture to new audiences.[167] The SFS positioned the Lightnin' Hopkins show to upset assumptions about Black artistic and cultural legitimacy, and they connected residents that otherwise would not have found themselves in the same place for an evening. In this sense, their work dissolved racial boundaries temporarily, yet this single night was not enough to create opportunity, remediate inequalities, or truly threaten the formidable "armor of racism." Folk music faltered in the face of structural forces and socioeconomic inequity that had had centuries to settle in Seattle.

At the show, a police and city government presence complicated the performance and threatened the sanctity of the event. Late in the show, Seattle police arrived in riot gear and threatened to vacate Washington Hall but upon arrival were somewhat confused as to who and what exactly they were supposed to be shutting down. One officer in particular was a bluegrass fan and recognized Phil and Vivian Williams, and it didn't compute to him to shut down something they were involved with, so the officers returned to the precinct to obtain further instruction. Instead of returning, the Cabaret Commissioner came in their place with a few minutes left in the show. The Commissioner, described as "short and rotund...[wearing] a three piece suit and...[who had likely been] yanked off the lap of some toots down in some club...was pissed at having to leave his usual habitat."[168] He claimed that the trifecta of alcohol, dancing, and underage attendees legitimized shutting the event down, but was ultimately convinced by the manager of Washington Hall to let it slide. According to John Ullman, the Hall's manager argued that this particular audience "was not like the fraternity kids who" would "come and throw up all over everything."[169] The political character and racial admixture of the event certainly motivated the raid. For example,

[167] John Ullman in Paul Dorpat, "John Ullman on the Lightning Hopkins Concert."
[168] John Ullman in Paul Dorpat, "John Ullman on the Lightning Hopkins Concert."
[169] John Ullman in Paul Dorpat, "John Ullman on the Lightning Hopkins Concert."

the location of a loud, heavily attended event in the Central District would have contributed to the novel (for the SFS) police activity. SFS shows were never raided at the Friends Center, although the SFS did not typically serve alcohol at the Friends Center either. SFS organizers, who designed this event with a political subtext, could have attracted extra attention from the authorities, as incongruously as they must've appeared in the Central District. Police and officials like the Cabaret Commissioner would have associated members of the SFS with radical politics and alternative lifestyles, as much as any outsider to the folk music community would have assumed that most folk music revivalists were long-haired, Communist hippies. As evidence to this, prior to establishing the SFS as a non-profit in 1966, Ullman had attempted and failed to launch the organization under the University of Washington (UW). UW administrators refused Ullman's proposal "because people looked on folk music as being aligned to these just disreputable movements and they looked at [Ullman], with all [his] hair, as disreputable and...as having a mixed-race marriage as disreputable...that whole attitude that people like [them] ought to be in jail."[170] Nevertheless, the presence of Phil and Vivian Williams, white folk musicians who were recognized by one of the officers as respectable, would have created a racially informed ameliorative effect that quashed their motivation to shut down the event. As stated by Irene Namkung, if the police had truly attempted to stop the show, which they likely would've under circumstances less adjacent to the white community, "there would have been a riot."[171]

The aborted police raid reveals the degrees of the racial and social order of the day, a reality which informed the SFS's desire to bring "disparate cultural groups together" to let "them see how much they have in common."[172] The SFS's methods continued into later years with uneasy success.

[170] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[171] Irene Namkung; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. The fact that the police raid was essentially a failure explains why no local newspapers reported on any kerfuffle at the event.
[172] John Ullman in Paul Dorpat, "John Ullman on the Lightning Hopkins Concert."

While attendees and SFS organizers remembered the Lightnin' Hopkins concert as the "one that can't be beat...the total highlight of everything ever," a similar and subsequent attempt to produce a John Lee Hooker concert at Washington Hall was a relative failure.[173] Not only was the show "terribly attended," but it was marked by a disruptive audience. Hooker had a stutter and couldn't respond to the requests and shouts of the audience, which resulted in an angry audience member disrupting the performance. In the eyes of the SFS, this concert failed to evoke the same meaningful impact that the Hopkins show achieved in the eyes of the SFS. Going forward, organizers utilized other methods to contact and include diverse communities. For example, when Lydia Mendoza played in Seattle, the SFS had "Spanish press releases written up and sent...to the Spanish language radio stations." Similarly, when Elizabeth Cotten performed they sent press releases for her performances to Black churches.[174] In general, these promotional efforts came later and often under other auspices, and most SFS concerts directly after the Hopkins show were "still mainly the sort of university-studenty kind of audience and the old folky kind of audience that was the mainstay of it."[175] While the Hopkins show provided a discrete opening for Black Seattleites to engage in an American music tradition, enjoy a night of live entertainment, and connect to family and friends, the single concert lacked the power to create substantial change, or even to establish an ongoing relationship between the Black and white cultural communities in Seattle. This failure reflects Quintard Taylor's assertion that efforts to promote racial tolerance and unity are "meaningless if people are excluded from the vital economic center and relegated to the margins of the urban economy."[176] In this sense, the SFS's attempt to repair racial division in the

[173] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[174] Namkung and Ullman managed both Cotten and Mendoza under their artist management company, Traditional Arts Services.
[175] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[176] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 239.

city reveals the limits of this brand of liberalism, which promoted an illusion of equality without addressing the social and economic forces at play. Granted, it wasn't so much the SFS's responsibility to remedy these problems, although it was the political subtext of their efforts. Some members of the SFS acknowledged the disparity between the Black and white population in Seattle, but "the vast majority of Seattleites" ignored the daily lived realities and plights of the "impoverished, the uneducated, the economically disadvantaged – particularly if they were of a different color." [177] In contrast, the SFS's work to encourage connection between another community on the margins, lubricated by cultural and racial sameness, directed the trajectory of the Seattle folk music community and region more widely.

Like their attempts to reach Black and Spanish-speaking communities in Seattle, the SFS strategized to draw musicians from Darrington, a rural community about 75 miles north of Seattle, into the folk music fold of the city. Unlike discrete efforts to host performances in the Central District, the relationship between old-time fiddlers and bluegrass musicians from Darrington and Seattle folk musicians was reciprocal and long-term. Darrington musicians, who played Appalachian bluegrass, were part of a community of North Carolina migrants originally drawn to work in the Northwest logging industry in the early 20th century.[178] Musician Vivian Williams, an early SFS member and important Seattle folk music figure, first interacted with the Darrington community at Seattle folk music stores. Before opening the Folk Store in the University District, local business owner Gordon Tracy "ran a record store in the Pike Place Market, and these guys from Darrington would come down and buy records of bluegrass people there," as it was "really

[177] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* 239.
[178] "The Migration, Darrington Washington," Hunter Library Omeka Collections, Digital Humanities WSU, accessed Oct. 6, 2022. https://digitalhumanities.wcu.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/washington-state-logging-and-m/the-migration; James W. Edgar, "All Roads Lead to Darrington: Building a Bluegrass Community in Western Washington." Edgar argues for the necessity of the collaboration between Darrington and Seattle music communities, suggesting "a sustained bluegrass community would not have developed without either party," and uses the relationship to challenge "stereotypes of who plays bluegrass, and where it originates," 11.

the only place in the area where you could get that stuff."[179] Musicians from Darrington could only access these relatively rare records in the city and made the trek accordingly, less to connect with city-dwelling folkies and more to access what would've been music that sounded like home. Still, it wasn't long before they were formally included in the Seattle folk music community. For the grand opening party for the Folk Store, Tracy closed off University Way and set up a stage, where "a band of the guys from Darrington...Fred McFalls and Bill Bryson" performed.[180] As it happened, Seattle photographer Irwin Nash attended and was duly impressed. Later, it would be Nash who personally introduced Phil and Vivian Williams to McFalls and other Darrington musicians. The subsequent exposure to the Darrington musicians reinforced Seattle folkie's understandings of folk music authenticity while their relationship would later influence the Seattle folk music sound.

When the Williams' first went north to Darrington to meet the McFalls, they had "never met people like that before" and had "this bad stereotype of hillbillies this and hillbillies that." They quickly realized that "they were just the nicest most down-to-earth, friendliest people in the world."[181] Both of these characterizations of rural residents, of perceived class distance (hillbillies) and friendly simplicity (down-to-earthiness), mirrored values similarly assigned to folk music. Vivian Williams came from a classical violin background and initially found the bluegrass fiddling "a little bit too harsh and weird." That quickly changed, and the old-time music that the Darrington musicians played came to exemplify an authentic folk music tradition. Where Vivian Williams was "barely aware" of Pacific Northwest song-collector Phil Thomas and found the Walt Robertson brand of English ballad folk singing to be "quite dull and boring and disconnected from any quote authentic unquote tradition," she believed the music played in Darrington to be

[179] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[180] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[181] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.

completely authentic. Part of this was due to one pervasive aspect of folk music ideology – the bias towards Appalachian and Southern song traditions, where "the farther it gets from being Southern [or] mountain stuff the less cool it is."[182] For urbanites like Williams, Darrington represented the closest geographical and ideological approximation of genuine folk music available, which mirrored the kind of understandings of folk music and performance visible in the SFS's efforts to "contextualize" the Lightnin' Hopkins show in urban Seattle. It was not sufficient to host rural musicians in the city without facilitating an authentic-seeming context, just as it was necessary to go outside of the city to find real folk. This understanding of authenticity replicated aspects of folk music ideology that could be seen across the nation – a revival of music linked to rural and fading lifestyles – and the application of these real and imagined qualities in the Northwest.[183]

For the Williams', their participation in the Darrington community substantiated the idea that folk music was most potent when embedded in the lives of community members. Their experience also reflects sociological differences in cultural communities of that time and a reciprocal relationship between city folk musicians and rural Washington state residents. As the Williams' became friendly with the Darrington community, they joined jam sessions with rising frequency. Vivian Williams in particular became increasingly adept at the fiddle through experience playing with Darrington musicians. From the beginning, her participation in the jam sessions was conspicuous. Williams stated that "at a typical gathering up there the guys would be in the living room playing music and all the women would be in the kitchen talking about babies and recipes and whatever." Vivian's role as a fiddler was critical to the session, but her presence

[182] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[183] Imagined in the sense that conceptions of place and landscape are carried across generations through ideas, songs, oral traditions and story-telling practices that do not rely on written record and reside in the human imagination.

as "a woman in the living room with the guys playing music" was, in William's perception, a "very strange" experience for the Darrington men. Some women in Darrington were musicians who played in the privacy of their home for the entertainment of their family, but they performed in public far less often than their male counterparts. An exception to this was Gladys Lewis, a Darrington woman who often performed with the local bluegrass boys, although gender defined her presence and role. In a 1979 documentary titled "Tarheels in the Northwest," a male bluegrass player framed Lewis as "a mother to the group...a mother to everybody around town, she's always trying to take care of everybody."[184] Clearly, traditional values and gender norms informed the social space in Darrington during this time. As an outsider, Williams was able to disrupt gender expectations relative to this community, though she was not completely immune from enforcement of gendered social policies. Williams believed that the Darrington men authorized her acceptance because she had her husband there as a "chaperone," and therefore she "wasn't a threat" to the structure and sanctity of the domestic sphere.[185] Beyond the obvious detail that she was a woman, Williams stood out because she was, self-admittedly, "a weird hippie looking chick" with her "hair in a braid." Her appearance as a young, countercultural woman was perhaps offset by the fact that "Phil looked totally straight," and she guessed that "that made me sort of okay, by association."[186] Vivian Williams' experience in Darrington illustrates a facet of gender norms in rural and urban communities in Washington state, in addition to the degree to which they were flexible. Williams navigated and exploited the available cultural leeway to gain access to guarded cultural skills, albeit within a framework where the relative freedom depended on the presence of a man. The

[184] "Tarheels in the Northwest," 1979-06-25, KCTS 9, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC, accessed February 14, 2023, https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_283-86b2rq2z.
[185] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[186] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.

Williams' ability to integrate into the Darrington community was certainly informed by a degree of racial and cultural proximity that facilitated their acceptance in a community known for excluding outsiders. As evidence to the Darrington community's resistance to newcomers, "Tarheels in the Northwest" features a newcomer from Seattle who described the Darrington community as "very clique-ish, very clannish, if they like you, they like you, if they don't, you ain't got a chance." After facing vandalism and boycotts at her new Darrington restaurant, the interviewee conceded that "we'll go back to where we belong, to Seattle."[187] Like Rika Ruebsaat in Fernie BC or Barbara Dane at the GI coffeehouse, factors of race, gender, and culture affected the Williams' ability to permeate the boundaries of the Darrington community. Regardless, Phil and Vivian "learned a lot" from the Darrington musicians. Beyond the absorption of technique, repertoire, and performance style, they gleaned "how music fits into a community" in a "very traditional" sense.[188] In that way, the Williams' got what they came for: access to traditional music forms and experience with folk music embedded in a community. These concepts informed the principles of the SFS, and later the Williams' development of the Northwest Folklife Festival.[189]

The relationship did not serve the Williams' exclusively but provided avenues for growth within the Darrington community. Phil Williams' technical experience served Darrington musicians, as he offered to run PAs and recording equipment for performances in and around the town. Because the Williams' provided technological assistance for community benefits and picnics, they became "quite popular." Vivian's skill as a fiddler, and Phil's PA system, "had a lot to do" with them both "being not just accepted socially...but getting into their music scene."[190] The

[187] KCTS 9, "Tarheels in the Northwest."
[188] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[189] At this point, Williams was close to or had already abandoned a future in academic Anthropology, which she earned a Master's degree in. It follows that she would be eager to gain practical experience, as her fatigue of academic research and ideology reinforced that she would "rather play music" than analyze "the melodic contours of the music...give me a break," she said. Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[190] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.

practical skills that the Williams' offered aided their acceptance and exposure to bluegrass music forms, contributing to their own sense of authentic engagement and artistic value. Likewise, their involvement provided benefit to the Darrington community by means of good fiddling and amplification, extending their reach and improving their sound. The efforts of the Williams to record "jam sessions, live concerts, and the fiddle and band contests held at Darrington's annual Timber Bowl" provided commercial opportunity and greater exposure for the Darrington musicians.[191] The relationship between the Williams and the Darrington community was reciprocal, where the flow of resources and knowledge ran in both directions. This functional relationship, based on personal connections and collaborations, facilitated beneficial exchanges between local folk music communities and undermined the kind of cultural extraction endemic to urban folk music cultures.[192]

Collaboration between Darrington musicians and the Seattle folk music community was further evident in a SFS concert at the Museum of History and Industry featuring Kentucky-born bluegrass musician Bill Monroe. The show drew the Darrington crowd to Seattle's urban center, and afterwards they "went up [and] they...started telling Monroe about how they had their big festival, they were teaching their kids to clog dance, they had a jam session every...Sunday afternoon...and Monroe said 'well, what if we came up and played a few songs?'" SFS members and Monroe took a bus to Darrington together and played "a good size set" in "their bluegrass boys' suits." SFS member John Ullman believed that the fact that Monroe, who at that time was nationally recognized, stopped in Darrington to play with local musicians indicated "how affected

[191] Edgar, "All Roads Lead to Darrington," 158. Some of these recordings are featured in Voyager Records' *Comin' Round the Mountain: Old Time Southern Singing and Playing in Western Washington.*

[192] Urban folk musicians in Greenwich Village, for example, were typically not travelling outside of the city to learn and play with rural musicians. They relied on other folk musicians and recordings like the *The Anthology of American Folk Music* to gain familiarity with material. This put them at a significant distance compared to the Williams.'

Monroe was by what these guys were doing," which in this case was maintaining valued cultural traditions. Monroe's approach to music "was about being of service to their audience, it wasn't about being big, famous, whatever, it was they liked that they were doing something that people appreciated. That was true of most of the people [the SFS] worked with."[193] In Ullman's memory, Bill Monroe and the Darrington community represented celebrated values of participation, intimacy, and music embedded within everyday life. Because these humble qualities aligned with SFS members understanding of folk music authenticity, it encouraged longer-lasting collaborations and support between the urban and rural folk music communities.

Their relationship to the Darrington folk music community may have reinforced the Williams' conceptions of what constituted authentic folk music, but later contact with other Western musicians complicated this ideology. The musicians of Darrington were very much in line with the Williams' ideas of traditional folk music, and their music practices reinforced an assumption that authentic American folk music originated from the South or Appalachia.[194] However, a new experience with regional Western fiddlers expanded the definition of American folk music for the Williams', which influenced the trajectory of their careers and the function of folk music in the Seattle community. In 1964, Vivian and Phil borrowed a big "Oldsmobile or Buick, some monster car of the era" and drove to Missoula, MT to see Phil's brother Bob and attend a fiddle contest. The contest introduced the Williams to a "whole world of fiddling that [they] did not have a clue about" that "totally blew [them] away." After recording and listening to several jam sessions from the contest, they realized that the music was "just as good as anything

[193] John Ullman; Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[194] A lot of this had to do with the popularity of the *Anthology of American Folk Music.*

that [Smithsonian] Folkways has ever put out," and importantly, it was distinctly "Western."[195] At the contest, there were "a whole ton of...interesting fiddlers" from the Northwest that brought Williams to the realization that "there really [was] something going on" in the region, that real folk music was existed in the region and was "not just from the South."[196] This experience with Western fiddling fueled a new, more spacious understanding of folk music for the Williams. Their appreciation of the richness of regional fiddling contributed to the motivation to form the Washington Old Time Fiddler's Association in 1965, an organization that opened a new forum for an older Northwest sound which had previously been underground or relegated to closed communities. By supporting fiddle tunes originating from the 1860s, the Williams' reinvigorated folk music forms as part of a primary element in the growing Northwest traditional music scene.[197] For the Williams, this experience also led to the founding of Voyager Records in 1967. Voyager, which the Williams' ran for decades and whose recordings now belong to Smithsonian Folkways, was an independent recording and publishing company that issued "recordings, tune books, and instructional materials of traditional acoustic fiddle and string band music" of primarily Pacific Northwest musicians.[198] When Phil and Vivian began "looking for local stuff...[their] mission became not to just show that we had cool Southern folks that had migrated here, but we had folks from all over who could play the hell out of the fiddle."[199] Inspired by a new acceptance of Western fiddling as part of an American folk music canon, Voyager recorded and issued dozens of Northwest folk and fiddle musicians and worked to preserve and publicize regional folk music.

[195] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021. Smithsonian Folkways released large volumes of international and American music of many genres, including the *Anthology of American Folk Music,* and was considered by folk revivalists to be the gold standard of authenticity.
[196] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[197] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 287.
[198] "Voyager Recordings and Publications: Traditional Fiddle and Acoustic Music From the Pacific Northwest & Beyond," Voyager Records, accessed Sept 8, 2022. https://www.voyagerrecords.com/
[199] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.

Voyager established regional fiddlers as representative of a Northwest folk music tradition, a concept which influenced the scope and vision of the Northwest Folklife Festival.[200] The inclusion of new Western fiddlers in the Northwest folk music scene created new avenues for connection and, in turn, influenced the character and sound of regional folk music. Although the Williams' experience with Western fiddlers in Montana expanded their definition of American folk music, this definition remained rooted to certain boundaries of authenticity. About 90 miles north of Seattle in Bellingham, folk music communities of the 1970s operated under a parallel ideology of authenticity and connection through folk music.

Bellingham Folk Music Stories

In Bellingham, a desire for human connection constituted the basis of the folk music community, and folk musicians achieved this on varied scales. Bellingham folk musicians believed there to be necessary factors in producing connection: group participation, intimate audience and performance dynamics, the operation of music on the physical body and mind, and the importance of nurturing a welcoming space. Compared to those in Seattle, folk musicians in Bellingham were more individualistic and focused less on direct social efforts. Instead, the Bellingham folk music community found themselves situated in a changing city amenable to young, creative transplants and focused their energy on their own community and their ties to the regional folk music network. In some ways, Bellingham folk musicians thought that relating to others required an almost metaphysical connection to oneself. They were motivated by a quest for meaning they felt lacking in contemporary life, and focused on cultivating both individual practice and close, personal relationships through folk music. Although local musicians recognized how folk music was

[200] The development of the Northwest Folklife Festival is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

ideologically tied to social change, the lack of impact beyond the confines of the Bellingham folk music community indicates the constraints of this ideology. However, as folk music spaces emerged in a shifting city, bonds between musicians developed and strengthened. These new relationships impacted the sound and quality of Northwest folk music into the 1970s and 80s.

Bellingham Changes

During the late 1960s, Bellingham transformed from a largely blue-collar town reliant on fishing, timber, and the paper industry to a wealthier, more bohemian liberal enclave. For example, in *Fairhaven: A History,* historian Brian L. Griffin notes the decline in the local salmon canning industry. Pacific American Fisheries, which was "the largest salmon canning company in the world [and] had been a foundation industry for Bellingham Bay since 1899" closed in 1966.[201] In 1969 the Georgia Pacific Paper Mill was so omnipresent that fumes strong enough to shut down local businesses wafted uptown, a persistent reminder of the plant conspicuously situated along the water's edge. By the 1970s, local activists and environmentalists questioned its ecological effect on Bellingham Bay, creating conflict between Bellingham residents. For some longer-term residents, newcomers lacked authority in the civic space because they simply hadn't been there long enough. In an oral history interview from 2006, a former Georgia Pacific employee described disagreements over industry and environmentalism between residents who had been in the area for a longer period and newcomers who "didn't have the whole history of the place." The GP employee stated that established families "should have more say than [newcomers]" because they had been settled in the area "for a hundred years."[202] Anger and tensions between residents manifested in

[201] Brian L. Griffin, *Fairhaven: A History* (Bellingham: Knox Cellars Publishing, 2015), 140.
[202] "Interview with Richard Perry," wwu:29345, 9 February 2006, box 1, Waterfront Oral History Project, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, 14-15. Richard Perry oral history

arguments about job security, ownership and access to land, and economic and environmental impacts. The divide between the working class and the educated elite widened after the establishment of Fairhaven College in 1967. An interdisciplinary liberal arts college within Western Washington University, Fairhaven College attracted students and professors from outside of the area who brought "a new and decidedly liberal approach" to the area and were "conversant with and supportive of the counter culture movement."[203] The neighborhood of Fairhaven may have been, at the end of 1960s, a worn down "embarrassment to an otherwise growing and prosperous Bellingham," it nevertheless provided the vacant and cheap property that attracted the many artists, students, veterans, and draft-dodgers to the neighborhood. The influx of these new residents ushered in what Griffin calls its "hippie period" and constituted the basis of the city's new, young activist community who clashed with older citizens.[204] In a 1969 article in the *Northwest Passage,* the mouthpiece of Bellingham hippies, the author called the GP chlorine production plant "one of the greatest potential hazards to the safety of the Bellingham community" and argued that "the public must demand that Georgia Pacific, which is the same company leading the rape of the redwoods in Northern California, stop its wanton exploitation and pollution of the environment for corporate profit."[205] In the folk music community, anxieties over a changing landscape and the environment emerged in new folk songs. A 1983 ballad by Northwest folksinger Linda Waterfall titled "The Whale Song" evoked the historical exploitation of whales in the early part of the 20th century to support "the current public awareness of the plight of the whale."[206]

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interview (transcript) | MABEL: Multimedia Archives Based Electronic Library | Western Washington University (wwu.edu).

[203] Griffin, *Fairhaven: A History*, 145.

[204] Griffin, *Fairhaven: A History*, 141.

[205] Chris Condon, "Georgia Pacific Poisons," *Northwest Passage* 1, no. 11, September 23, 1969, 2. For other *Northwest Passage* reports on Georgia Pacific, see George Hartwell, "The G-P Octopus," *Northwest Passage* 4, no. 7, January 18, 1971, 4-5; Joel Connelly, "Georgia Pacific: The Forbidding Castle," *Northwest Passage* 2, no. 3, December 16, 1968, 2-3. The GP pulp mill shut down permanently in 2007.

[206] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 117.

Waterfall performed this song to encourage cetacean sympathies at a benefit concert for the Whale Museum in Friday Harbor in adjacent San Juan County. Other folk songs, like Karen Reitz Hagen's "On the Island" (1978) and Judith Avinger's "Rainy Day" (1978), deployed long-held Northwest associations – the rain, trees, a cozy sense of interiority in holing up away from the elements – to remind listeners what was at risk in expansion and progress.[207] "Our State is a Dumpsite," a 1985 original by Seattle folksinger Dana Lyons, discussed at length in the following chapter, is another notable song from the same time that drew attention to the selection of Hanford, Washington as a possible site for depositing nuclear waste. Lyons' tune communicated the atomic threat looming over the state's landscape and embodied the collective sentiment of unease at environmental changes in the Northwest.

Pacific Northwest folk singers had cause to express a similar brand of righteous anger stimulated by resentment towards social and political concerns, both nationally and locally. In a 1980 article about Seattle folksinger Jim Page's performance at WWU's folk music coffeehouse Mama Sunday's, the *Western Front* noted that "another re-emergence of folk music is surfacing...the rise in popularity is because of another unstable period in our government and throughout the world." This was a continuation of the 1960s era folk ideology rooted in disgruntled reactions to government power and mid-century alienation, but Page's refiguring of Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" as "Baloney in the Wind" illustrates resentful sentiments towards the futility of past social movements. The *Front* describes Page as spitting and snarling "at the world in furious malignity...an intense man searching and describing human conditions."[208] Page's anger at the past and frustration in the present reflects an aspect of the folk music tenor of the time, at the end of the 1970s – a tangible call to rediscover forms that mend the dismayed "human condition." Folk

[207]Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 56-57.
[208] Stan Holmes, "Page's ballads about suffering," *Western Front,* May 20, 1980, 8.

musicians in Bellingham were situated in close proximity to changes in culture, demographics, and conflicts in the city, and would have been acutely aware of local instability as much as they were to ongoing issues on the national scale. Racial tensions and resentment heightened in Bellingham in the 1960s and 70s, although a history of racial discrimination extended as far back as the history of colonization in the area. For example, while the majority of Washington state chapters of the Ku Klux Klan collapsed in the 1920s, a strong presence remained in Whatcom and Skagit counties throughout the 1920s and 30s.[209] In 1926, over 700 KKK members marched through Bellingham in the annual Tulip Parade. In 1929, the KKK held their annual convention in Bellingham, where the Mayor of Bellingham acknowledged the city attorney as a prominent Klansman and presented a key to the city to Spokane's Grand Dragon.[210] Bellingham saw discriminatory practices continue across decades. In the 1930s, restrictive housing covenants, akin to those in Seattle, outlined occupancy limitations based on race. In 1942, President Roosevelt's executive order authorized the internment of Bellingham's Japanese American citizens, and enforcement of "sundowning" practices may have occurred during the 1950s, wherein Black residents were driven in vehicles and left along the outskirts of town.[211] In 1968, Western Washington University's Black Student Union (BSU) fought against inequity in the university system and issued a letter to the university president, demanding six actions to address institutional racism. These demands, ranging from greater BSU involvement in university decisions to

[209] See the Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/; "The Ku Klux Klan in Washington State," The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, University of Washington, accessed February 17, 2023, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/kkk_intro.htm.
[210] "1929 KKK Convention," Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/kkk-convention/.
[211] "1930s Real Estate Exclusion," Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/sundowning/; "1942 Japanese Internment," Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/japanese-internment/; "1950s Sundowning," Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/sundowning/.

increased recruitment and financial support of Black students, eventually led to the creation of WWU's College of Ethnic Studies. Unfortunately, after only eight short years, the university failed to support the college and it was subsequently closed.[212] Bellingham's Black community was not the only group to experience racism and discrimination during this period. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, Indigenous tribes held "fish-ins" to protest their exclusion from commercial fishing industries. Non-Native fishers reacted violently to activist efforts and sabotaged Indigenous fisher boats, nets, and traps, in addition to threatening Native fishers with violence. Conflicts between Indigenous protesters, non-Native fishers, and the state escalated to the point that game wardens deployed tear gas, billy clubs, and guns to disperse protesters. A 1970 confrontation culminated in gunshots fired by Tacoma police on 59 protesters camped on the Puyallup River, where Indigenous protesters "were beaten and brutally manhandled."[213] In 1973, Lummi Nation alongside thirteen other Western Washington tribes sued the state of Washington to restore their fishing rights, leading to the 1974 Boldt Decision.[214] Amidst racial and social turmoil, Bellingham was a city in flux. Residents like Black WWU students and Lummi tribal members fought against racism and inequity, social demographics shifted away from a blue-collar majority, and long-standing industries like timber and fishing declined rapidly. It was within this volatile social and political context that Bellingham folk musicians organized informally, and relatively apolitically, around shared values of connection.

WCHMS Ethos and Projects: Meaningful Personal Vocabularies

[212] "1960's WWU Students Protest," Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/1960s-students-of-color-protest/; "Flora issues new statement; to act on BSU demands," *Western Front,* May 21, 1968, 1-2.
[213] Alex Tizon, "The Boldt Decision / 25 Years – The Fish Tale That Changed History," *The Seattle Times,* February 7, 1999, https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=19990207&slug=2943039.
[214] "1960's & 70's Fish Wars," Bellingham Racial History Timeline, Western Washington University, accessed February 17, 2023, https://wp.wwu.edu/timeline/1970s-violence-against-lummis/.

As historian Clare Donaldson states in *I Hear America Singing,* an examination of folk music community and belonging, folk music traditions could "create or re-create 'a personal and collective identity.'"[215] Certainly, the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society (WCHMS) used folk music to generate both. Established in 1975 by musician Richard Scholtz, the WCHMS quickly became an epicenter orbited by local folkies and an important nexus of West Coast folk music in the late 1970s and 80s. Scholtz formed the WCHMS with a clear objective in mind: create space for local musicians to meet, mingle, learn, perform, and watch concerts from a host of regionally and nationally known acts. The WCHMS created a place for folk song circles, performances at Bellingham's historic Roeder Home, jam sessions, and a rotating concert series that brought the likes of Peggy Seeger, Ewan McColl and Elizabeth Cotten to town. These were projects designed by a cast of individuals to engender the kind of close human connection and practices of knowledge sharing that they perceived as absent from quotidian and contemporary life. Unlike the work of the Seattle Folklore Society, the WCHMS did not attempt to reach communities outside of their own or restructure cultural and racial divides in the city. Instead, they prioritized individual artistic development and connections within the Northwest and national folk music community.

A tenet of the WCHMS was that folk music was both a "meaningful personal vocabulary [and] a participatory activity rather than a spectator sport." Ideally, folk music practice would involve a deeply individual approach and an ability "to integrate music in your community life."[216] In other words, the most enlightened moments occurred at a slippery intersection of individual and communal experience. For Scholtz, the ability to connect to others through folk music relied on

[215] Donaldson, *I Hear America Singing,* 141. The author is citing Anthony Gidden, who argued that young folk music enthusiasts "interest in traditional folk music seems to be an example of [Gidden's] argument that some communities rely on traditions in an effort to create or re-create 'a personal and collective identity.'"
[216] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.

his personal and emotional experience of music. Scholtz described a particular meditative state necessary as a precursor to sharing music, where the practice of playing and practicing alone was "a path to meaning rather than just repetitive physical things you can do with your fingers."[217] This ambiguous, subjective type of meaning was "essential and crucial," and could "only be said through music." Scholtz was less interested in specific, regional Pacific Northwest music because he was "trying to find music that felt like it was mine...that I want to have become part of my life."[218] To this end, finding personal significance in folk music came "before sharing, even if you're just sharing in your living room" because "to engage yourself with music meaning, to discover what has meaning for you…you discover what you love enough that it becomes part of your life" and therefore worthwhile to share within a community.[219] Bellingham folk musicians believed that the ability to build community through folk music practice relied on these individual experiences and interpretations. This reflects the late 1960s shift from the repetition and familiarity of old folk song standards to new forms of songwriting based in individual subjectivities. In *I Hear America Singing,* Donaldson argues that "topical songwriters of the baby boom imbued their songs with individualism, a perspective that was largely lacking in topical songs" from earlier times.[220] According to regional historian Richard M. Brown, this turn in focus towards the concerns of the individual occurred at a time when the individual quest for identity was one of three main aspects

[217] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[218] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[219] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[220] Donaldson, in *I Hear America Singing*, 150. Donaldson specifically mentions Dylan as "the most dramatic symbol" of the shift from political songwriting that "emphasized social reform or world-wide reform" to "an introspective turn" that "focused more on a search for real and human values," 160. In *Romancing the Folk,* Filene argues that Dylan's shift to "appropriat[ing] and personaliz[ing] American roots music" did not mean the death of folk music in the latter half of the 20th century. Dylan expanded the sonic possibilities and reach of folk music while remaining situated in the ideological principles of the revival period, 218. Dylan's personal and individualistic folk music vocabulary "showed that even in a postindustrial, pop rock culture, a folk stylist could create relevant, contemporary songs rooted in tradition," 232.

of Pacific Northwest regionalism.[221] For WCHMS folkies, centering the importance of individual experiences did not preclude human connection. They believed that building "personal [folk music] vocabularies" was a necessary step in the process from which connection to others was a natural progression. Without incubating as an organic element in the individual lives of folk musicians, folk music practice could not operate on a larger scale. The ideology of folk musicians in Bellingham relied on an individual drive to rediscover meaning in light of contemporary experiences of cultural and psychic dislocation.

Folk Music Practice: Participation, Collaboration, Intimacy

For Bellingham musicians in the WCHMS, folk music existed in a space ideally embedded into everyday life and based in emotion. Importantly, folk music facilitated human connection in a broad, general sense. These conceptions of the function of folk music were a continuation of the national folk music revival ideology into the 1970s and 80s. As in Seattle, folk music practice was informed by the local context.

The programs of the WCHMS supported the quest for connection by applying collaborative culture and participation as a balm against contemporary social disorder, albeit within a relatively confined community. When Richard Scholtz started the Homemade Music Society, "the idea would be...that participation was really the main thing."[222] Participation in various capacities formed an important guiding principle of the group. Bellingham, as a growing city, was a place where "there was a lot of creative energy" and that musicians thought "was really different from many towns." Here, "people were collaborative with each other…it wasn't like people were

[221] Brown, "New Regionalism in America," in *Regionalism and the Pacific Northwest*, 64.
[222] "Richard Scholtz oral history," 20 October 2005, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, 6. Richard Scholtz oral history | MABEL: Multimedia Archives Based Electronic Library | Western Washington University (wwu.edu)

wrestling over performance spaces because there really weren't any."[223] The spirit of artistic collaboration in Bellingham transferred into the WCHMS, where song circles encouraged literal participation in the music in the classic folk music singalong type format. As the WCHMS concert series expanded, growing demand required updated management. In place of Scholtz acting as the sole concert booker, a rotating group of individuals took responsibility for booking concerts. Instead of creating a formal concert committee, the rotating hosts selected the artist and location and handled the mostly word-of-mouth marketing. This system generated a "much bigger awareness about The Homemade Music Society in the community because the hosts had their own friends" and "friend networks" that encouraged higher numbers of attendance. It also allowed for greater variety of music and, through this system of participation and engagement, created "an audience that people loved, it was an audience that was completely present and knew that their curiosity and support as an audience would make a difference to how the player played." Part of this zeitgeist was due to Bellingham's geographic location, where performers booked in Seattle or Vancouver, BC, "could make good money on a Wednesday night between Seattle and Vancouver." The vitality of the community was also related to how the WCHMS "successfully taught [the methodology of participation and connection] to an audience."[224] According to WCHMS members, Bellingham's distinctly collaborative audience enhanced the folk music experience for everyone. By decentering hierarchies of performance and integrating music into life, WCHMS participants believed they could create meaning and belonging.

As in the Seattle folk music community, constructions of authenticity influenced folk music practice. The rejection of musical practices not based in intimate, small-scale experience

[223] "Richard Scholtz oral history," 8. Scholtz stated that "people were here because there was a community of people to play music with."
[224] "Richard Scholtz oral history," 5-6.

characterized the WCHMS. Bellingham folkies believed that song circles and casual performances facilitated an "unspoken acceptance" that tightened communal bonds, and the WCHMS welcomed participants "as if [they] were from across the street or across the hollow or something." One member mused that the closeness brought about by folk music was intrinsic to the form and its history, stating that "it seems very true in old time and folk and bluegrass music, that people are very accepting of you if you play the same kind of music that they do."[225] This response exposes how Bellingham folk musicians believed that, historically, communities utilized folk music to encourage social intimacy and that they were continuing in the same tradition. The WCHMS was focused enough this immediacy of experience and participation that they were markedly disinterested in recording. In fact, Scholtz's dismissal of recording, which he viewed as generally "terrible," was grounded in a commitment to the importance of the "transitory nature" of "the participatory and live experiences" within the "intimate space" of typical WCHMS performance venues like Bellingham's Roeder Home.[226] The WCHMS rejected modern forms of recording technology, large venues and amplification, and performance styles that separated audience and artist. According to Bellingham folk musician Linda Allen, folk music wasn't music "that you would likely hear on the radio, but it was something much earthier and much more grounded in the everyday lives of people."[227] The ethos of the WCHMS reflected a contemporary yearning for immediate human connection based in cultural forms of the past.

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[225] "Laurel Bliss oral history," 16 February 2006, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, 11. Laurel Bliss oral history | MABEL: Multimedia Archives Based Electronic Library | Western Washington University (wwu.edu)

[226] "Laurel Bliss oral history," 9. In comparison to the SFS, as of 1977, they had "produced 40 videotapes" which were "transferred to 16mm films that [could] be rented and over 50 audio tapes of such legendary performers as Sonny Terry, Elizabeth Cotten, and Rev. Gary Davis," Doug Honig, "A New Folk Center?" 19. The SFS also had a relationship with local radio station KRAB, which helped publicize the SFS and their concert series to create a type of cultural "synergy." John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. Pete and Vivian Williams' Voyager Records is further evidence that the Seattle folk music community embraced technology more readily than the Bellingham community.

[227] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.

The function of folk music to connect individuals both spiritually and physically was significant to the WCMHS. Scholtz described how playing music together facilitated a state of "intensity, of being in the present moment when you play music with other people and being out of the abstract, verbal part of [him]self."[228] In this way, folk musicians believed that music allowed passage into a kind of singular state of consciousness. Through one of the WCHMS's many song circles and jam sessions, participants thought they unlocked an alternate state that connected them to others. Flip Breskin, a musician active in the WCHMS and the regional folk music community, echoed a similar experience of transcendence bound to the physical form. She stated that "when you sing together with a group of people intentionally, the voices come in...and the air comes in and touches us and so you're embedded and connected physically...[which] really helped knit communities together." For Breskin and Scholtz, the connective benefits of group singing relied on the body. Breskin noted that "every big successful change movement has included singing...it fits the architecture of our brains" and creates a pathway to "connect us to our own hearts."[229] Folkies believed in the remarkable quality of communal singing to both facilitate human connection between individuals and within the self. Breskin was not the only Bellingham folk musician that espoused a view that shared musical experience was deep-seated in the physical body. Scholtz described a parallel belief that folk songs "passe[d] from person to person...because...it's designed to fit human memory."[230] This metaphysical understanding of folk music practice, that songs not only literally fit the human mind but acted in the body to connect to other people, reflects the depth to which folkies yearned for connection. For WCHMS folk

[228] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[229] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.
[230] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.

musicians, folk songs could be utilized to construct a more deeply human community, where even the boundaries between bodies softened.

In place of strong identifications with region and Washington state folk music history, WCHMS musicians crafted new forms of local cultural identity specific to Bellingham. Among the musicians of the WCHMS, there were "all-time fiddlers, there were bagpipe players, there were political songwriters, there were traditional singers of songs of the Northwest, there [was] Linda Allen and contemporary songs written about women's issues." Artists within these categories did not just represent who was playing, they also represented "who was listening."[231] The presence of and interest in historical folk music from Washington state ("The Old Settler" et al.) varied individually. Some figures such as Linda Allen, who would later help produce the songbook compendium *Washington Songs and Lore* in 1989, displayed a greater interest in historical folk song. For his part, Richard Scholtz wasn't "very aware of what Washington's songs were, as separate from this broader source of music" and wasn't "very clear about or cared a whole lot about geographic roots" at that time.[232] Scholtz attributed this disconnection from place to the relative young age and small population of the state. Because of the lack of a long regional musical tradition, musicians from outside of the state, like those in the Darrington community, "brought a tradition with them" as opposed to starting from scratch. Although enthusiasm for Washington state folk songs varied between individuals, many WCHMS members played Washington songs, and there existed "a body of songs that was more in Bellingham than other places." While WCMHS musicians didn't necessarily sit around singing Washington-themed songs like "'dig a duck, dig a duck, dig a gooey duck'" night after night, it is more accurate to say that they "did sing a few of them…[and] played enough with each other to develop a style of music that was regional... and

[231] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[232] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.

developed a set of repertoires that was familiar...and was different from if we lived in Missouri, absolutely."[233] WCHMS folk musicians did not necessarily link their musical identities solely to conceptions of Washington's past or a distinct set of cultural definitions. Instead, the folk music identity of the region was aided and informed by Bellingham's collaborative community. Because Bellingham lacked significant job opportunities, and since most newcomers came without work, it meant that if someone stuck around it was because they "figured out a way to become self-employed." As established, this created an energetic and resourceful population, an "interesting group of creative people who...had some creative energy in themselves but were also community-minded."[234] In this economic and cultural context, recent transplants to Bellingham were more apt to collaborate, and more motivated to find and build their own community – there "wasn't a strong tradition" that they "moved into...[they] created it."[235] For Scholtz, this was a continuation of a kind of folk process that didn't rely exclusively on folk songs with explicit ties to place. Instead, the WCHMS created connections through practices of participation and collaboration to fashion a burgeoning local music identity and sense of belonging. WCHMS musicians believed they produced a space for deeper and further reaching forms of human connection. By working to formalize a distinct community built around shared ideology and cultural values, the WCHMS formulated a new Place – Bellingham as a "home in a way that no place had ever been."[236]

Although the WCHMS created a community based on an ideology of inclusion, it was "home" only for those situated within the confines of a relatively closed group. Part of this was because the WCHMS did not prioritize political activism or social outreach in Bellingham. Bellingham folk musicians viewed traditional and folk music as a suitable vehicle for social change

[233] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[234] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[235] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[236] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.

in a diffuse sense that didn't typically spur direct action. The mission of the WCHMS never was to formally organize to remediate discrimination or inequity in Bellingham, yet their ideology adhered to progressive political ideals tied to the national folk music movement. Geographically, Bellingham may have been far from the folk music epicenters of Greenwich Village but Northwest folk musicians considered themselves connected to a politicized, national scene. Folksinger Bill Murlin admitted that the Pacific Northwest felt "somewhat insulated and insular except for hearing the music on the radio," but was still connected with the politics of the day.[237] For her part, Bellingham musician Linda Allen came to folk music through the likes of Pete Seeger and Joan Baez, political folk singers on the national stage and with long activist histories, who inspired Allen to become more feminist and political. The bond between folk music and social or political activism, forged by earlier folk singers, nurtured a generic belief that folk music could "bring people together in spirituality…bring people together in protest…bring people together for humor and laughter."[238] Allen believed that the Bellingham folk music community in the 1970s was politically active and stated that for her the women's and peace movement was very important. Prior to moving to Bellingham, Allen sang at rally alongside Joan Baez in Berkeley, took USO tours in Vietnam, Japan, and Australia, and sang on the Golden Gate Bridge as part of an anti-war demonstration. In later decades, Allen performed at the National Organization for Women conference in 1986, started a local chapter of Women in Black, a women's anti-war organization, and developed original programming relating the history of women's suffrage.[239] By her own admission, Allen "worked hard to show up with songs at protests and events whenever [she] felt it would be useful" and said that in Bellingham she felt as if she had found a support community

[237] Interview with Bill Murlin, September 1, 2021.
[238] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[239] "Scrapbook," lindasongs.com, accessed February 18, 2023, https://www.lindasongs.com/scrapbook.

where her own stories and songs were welcome.[240] Allen identified herself as politically active on a personal level, which didn't necessarily translate to any organized political efforts within the WCHMS. Flip Breskin confirmed that she and other folk musicians attended political rallies and marched and led group singing at protests for "civil rights, of women's rights, of ending the Vietnam war." Breskin believed that in the 1960s, they "did such an extraordinary good job of mobilizing," and though they "weren't able to keep it holding" it was nonetheless a "big success." Aligned with the concept that folk music could spur action that changed the world, Breskin still returned to the importance of "sitting around the living room" to sing songs, which was for "the joy of singing together" and the opportunity to find power and purpose in one's own voice. Breskin affirmed that in being "welcomed in to sing, you left feeling connected" and that this is what "really helped knit communities together."[241] In general, Bellingham folk musicians of this era expressed varied opinions and levels of engagement with political action and protest, and perhaps for this reason did not facilitate much in the way of organization or civil action. Because they nurtured folk music practice tied to individual and personal relationships within a closed community, their ability to generate impact in the greater community faltered. The characterization of the city and community as a "welcoming environment" masked existing realities of segregation and discrimination.[242] This incongruity indicates the boundaries of folk music ideology of the time: it was a comfortable brand of inclusion based on diffuse political sensibilities and confined to a relatively closed community. However, the WCHMS did succeed in cultivating meaning and connections for new Bellingham residents through folk music. As the Bellingham folk music

[240] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[241] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021. Breskin stated that folk music like "Blowin' the Wind" and "If I Had a Hammer" were statements "about changing the world, a real clear, strong statement about changing the world." “Flip Breskin oral history,” 21 November 2005, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, https://mabel.wwu.edu/islandora/object/wwu%3A918.
[242] Terri Weiner, "Rob Lopresti and Terri Weiner oral history," 5 March 2007, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, https://mabel.wwu.edu/islandora/object/wwu%3A920.

community developed and integrated performers from beyond the regional sphere, it facilitated relationships that would influence the sound and character of Northwest folk music.

Elizabeth Cotten in the Pacific Northwest

The first time Flip Breskin really heard Elizabeth Cotten perform, it was a transcendent experience. Seated in the crowd at the Friends Center in Seattle's University District, Breskin remembered how "every person there was there to hear her play." Unlike her first exposure to Cotten in concert, which was in a noisier space with a less focused crowd, the audience listened in rapt attention. As Cotten picked her way across "Washington Square Blues," Breskin's "heart filled up...[it] filled right up with her music...and spilled over into tears and [Breskin] just sat there, shaking, trembling with tears running down [her] face."[243] For Breskin, this was a profound moment of connection that reaffirmed her conviction in the power of folk music. While folk music perhaps didn't create the revolutions in the social landscape it promised, folk music performances and relationships connected individuals and informed new practices in the region. Though Cotten hailed originally from North Carolina, she contributed to the Northwest folk music style by means of a recurrent and impactful presence and practice. Her relationship to folk musicians in the Pacific Northwest shows how networks of cultural knowledge functioned across divides of lived experience during the folk music revival. Like the Seattle Folklore Society's attempt to bridge segregation in Seattle, the influence of Cotten in the Pacific Northwest illuminates the adherence to tenets of authenticity in addition to racial dynamics in a specific cultural space. For regional folk musicians, the influence of Elizabeth Cotten provided hope that it was possible to disrupt

[243] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021; "Flip Breskin oral history," 21 November 2005, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral Histories, https://mabel.wwu.edu/islandora/object/wwu%3A918.

forms of contemporary dislocation and disconnection, at least for those who were lucky enough to be there.

Cotten's performance at the Friend's Center, and subsequent performances in Washington state, were events that connected individuals socially and culturally.[244] The impact of Cotten's performances were in part due to the emotional quality of her performance style, which created a mutually respectful atmosphere and inspired almost spiritual reactions in the audience. Breskin described the audience at Cotten's Friend's Center performance as "a sacred space...a place where people [were] inclined to listen...and everybody was listening in a really deep way, and [Cotten] responded to that and played beautifully and played with deep feeling and really offered us what she had to give."[245] In this sense, the act of conscious listening by the attendees created the "sacred space," which in turn allowed Cotten to embody the emotional qualities of the music. The quiet reverence of the audience allowed Cotten to fully immerse herself in the music and connect to a relatively unfamiliar audience. According to folksinger Molly Mason, Cotten's "technical ability and...her sincerity and humility as a human being...[came] across very personally and very powerfully...with feeling that only the 82 years of her life could produce."[246] Cotten's performance style bridged the gap between herself, an 82-year old Black woman from North Carolina who played the guitar "upside-down and backwards," and young white folkies from the Northwest.[247] Cotten, who was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1895, was a self-taught guitarist and banjoist known for her unique style "characterized by simple figures played on the bass strings in counterpoint to a melody played on the treble strings...she fretted the strings with her right hand

[244] Cotten had a significant impact nationally, see Allyson McCabe, "How Elizabeth Cotten's music fueled the folk revival," National Public radio, June 29, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2022/06/29/1107090873/how-elizabeth-cottens-music-fueled-the-folk-revival.
[245] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021; “Flip Breskin oral history,” 21 November 2005, https://mabel.wwu.edu/islandora/object/wwu%3A918.
[246] Molly Mason, "Three Stars of Mountain Music," *Northwest Passage*, March 1, 1976, 18.
[247] Mason, "Three Stars," 18.

and picked with her left, the reverse of the usual method." Her completely original technique "became known as 'Cotten style.'"[248] Interestingly, a chance encounter with a young Peggy Seeger led Cotten to employment with the Seeger family and later recordings with Mike Seeger. In 1958, when she was 62, Cotten recorded her first album, *Elizabeth Cotten: Negro Folk Songs and Tune.* This record introduced her best-known song, "Freight Train," to a wide audience – a song she wrote at the young age of eleven or twelve. Into the 1960s, folk music revivalists adopted her music as "a staple of the folk revival" and Cotten toured widely, won awards, and received media attention up until her death in 1987.[249] Cotten's legacy as a national figure in folk music made it even more remarkable that she agreed to return to the Northwest to perform and teach over the years.

Cotten's involvement in the Northwest included performances hosted by the Seattle Folklore Society and the WCHMS, which presented Cotten in Bellingham many times in the 1970s. When she came to Bellingham, Breskin would host Cotten in her own home. Over time, Cotten and Breskin developed trust and friendship, which allowed Breskin to take private and impromptu guitar lessons from Cotten. In Breskin's words, she was able to "learn, really learn, to play music from her."[250] This relationship facilitated Cotten's exposure to other folk musicians in the Pacific Northwest, as Breskin also routinely invited Cotten to be a repeat fixture at the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop (PSGW). PSGW, founded by Breskin and other local folk musicians in 1974, met each summer in a camp-like setting near Bremerton, WA. Programmers structured the event around musician-hosted workshops and song sessions that fostered a low-stakes environment for adults to

[248] "Elizabeth Cotten: Master of American folk music," Smithsonian Folkways, accessed January 11, 2023, https://folkways.si.edu/elizabeth-cotten-master-american-folk/music/article/smithsonian.
[249] "Elizabeth Cotten: Master of American folk music," Smithsonian Folkways. Cotten gave small concerts to senators and congressmen in their homes, performed at festivals including the Newport Folk Festival and the Smithsonian Festival, and won the National Folk 1972 Burl Ives award among other achievements.
[250] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.

develop their guitar skills. Cotten taught at PSGW several times, which "was a very big gift" from her. "It was a big ask" because it involved travel for a woman in her 80s and, according to Breskin, Cotten was required to enter a "sea of white people...[an even] more intense sea of white people than a festival." Unfortunately, no first-person account by Cotten exists that provides insight into her experiences and anxieties. According to Breskin, Cotten felt "scared out in the woods."[251]

In the accounts of Northwest folk musicians, Cotten was aware of her conflicted status as both a Black woman and a "tradition bearer" in a country reckoning with a legacy of racism.[252] In an instance where John Ullman picked up Cotten and Mike Seeger from the Portland airport in the early 1980s, Cotten complained that Seeger "insisted she'd be in a wheelchair" during a layover in St. Louis. As Seeger wheeled her through the concourses, she noticed stares from passers-by. Ullman explained away the stares from onlookers as a recognition of Cotten's celebrity, imagining them thinking or "saying 'there goes Elizabeth Cotten.'" When Ullman asked Cotten, she said "you know why they were looking at us, I'll tell you why they were looking at us. They were looking at us thinking, why is that young white man pushing that old Negro lady? She should be pushing him."[253] This anecdote reveals the divisions of experience based on race, where Ullman saw Cotten primarily as a folk music figurehead and Cotten understood how she could be received and perceived based on race alone. Ullman's respect for Cotten within a folk music context masked realities of race and discrimination. Regardless, Cotten travelled and performed nationally throughout her eighties, often in mostly white spaces like the PSGW. Where she had started her career as an opener for Mike Seeger, by the "end of her life she was the attraction and [Seeger]

[251] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.
[252] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[253] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021. Ullman and Namkung managed Cotten's Pacific Northwest bookings under their company Tradional Arts Booking.

would sort of come along with her a little bit."[254] Her prominence within the folk music revival provided her with cultural weight, and her proximity to the Southern blues tradition lent her a prized aura of authenticity. These elements positioned Cotten as an attractive connection to have for Northwest folkies.

According to Flip Breskin, Cotten navigated an uncomfortable and threatening space to assert herself as an authority socially and musically. For example, Breskin accommodated Cotten's requests and would "bring her favorite rocking chair from home so that she had a comfortable place" to sit. When Cotten was at PSGW, attendees adjusted their behavior to reflect their respect of Cotten: "the cussing just plummeted, there was almost no cussing" and they "started cleaning up after themselves better." Like her performance at the Friends Center, people listened reverently when she performed. More than that, Cotten took time to sit with campers who wanted to "try to figure out what she was doing" on the guitar, much as she had with Breskin.[255] Cotten took control while engaging in and facilitating the type of musical connection longed for by folk musicians in attendance. It is not ultimately clear how Cotten experienced the PSGW and what her motivations were for coming back. She very well could've occupied an uneasy space as a cultural outsider while also enjoying her status of one of the nation's most respected blues guitarists. Cotten's standing as a tradition bearer, symbolic of folk music ideals of authenticity, lubricated her acceptance into the community. As a result, she contributed songs to a community repertoire and taught a distinctive set of skills to many Pacific Northwest folk musicians that they otherwise would not have had access to. In this sense, the Northwest folk music community was a welcoming space, where folk music principles of diversity provided tangible openings for connection and knowledge sharing.

[254] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[255] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of the activities of regional folk musicians and folk music organizations, this chapter shows how networks of folk musicians in the Northwest attempted to create links of human connection during the 1970s and 80s. In response to significant local changes and sentiments of disconnection, folk musicians reformulated folk culture through the development of new organizations like the Seattle Folklore Society and the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society. Seattle and Bellingham folk music communities shared similarities and diverged at certain points, yet they were equally emplaced and relational. Both communities responded to rapid periods of growth, changes in demographics, and separation between groups within their locales. For Seattle folk musicians, producing folk music concerts for new audiences and engaging with rural communities was a way to reinvigorate what they saw as vital forms of the past. Folk musicians of the SFS sought to ease social dislocation and address contemporary problems of race in their city. To that end, they focused some of their efforts on outreach to Seattle's Black community and contextualized folk music forms, as in the case of the Lightnin' Hopkins concert. This was a continuation of folk music revival movement ideology which tied civil action and struggles for equality to folk music. Where earlier folk musicians and organizers used folk songs and their lyrical content as a literal form of protest, the SFS created physical spaces around folk music to bringing people together for a short time. Disrupting segregated spaces in Seattle was no small feat; however, the SFS's efforts lacked the institutional power to upset structural forces of racism and discrimination entrenched in Seattle. The comparative ability of Phil and Vivian Williams to join and support the Darrington bluegrass community provides contrast and evidence as to how social factors like race and gender softened cultural boundaries. As SFS members and prominent Seattle folk musicians, the Williams bridged social divides more readily

and with enduring impact in a community known for being wary and quick to reject outsiders. The permeability of these boundaries related to social markers of acceptability, although the Williams' experience also speaks to the degree to which they were flexible. In Bellingham, folk music values of participation and intimacy informed the work of the WCHMS. These values, heightened in a changing Bellingham, were tied to tenets the national revival movement which all but guaranteed folk music as an agent of social cohesion. This comfortable narrative assigned meaning and purpose to folk music practice, but in lieu of direct action and political purpose, it could not dissolve boundaries between communities. In Seattle and Bellingham, folk music practice and ideologies situated the folk music community as an explicitly welcoming place. While it certainly was for some, this construction masked deeper structures of racial and cultural division in the Northwest. Regardless, the connective potential of folk music was a reality for many folk musicians in the region. Specifically, Elizabeth Cotten's friendship with Flip Breskin facilitated her involvement and cultural impact in the Northwest. For many young newcomers in Bellingham, the WCHMS filled a vacuum of community support emptied in the face of progress, generating a new Eden of meaning and connection. The WCHMS and SFS both succeeded in linking to folk music communities outside of their respective cities by relying on the energy and conviction of individuals. In the end, folk music communities in the Northwest during the end of the folk music revival period were both emboldened and limited by their own experiences and ideologies, providing evidence to the instability of structures of belonging and the unsteady nature of the stories we tell about our region, our cities, and ourselves.

Chapter 3

State Sponsored Folk

During the 1970s and 80s, folk music in Washington state took on greater dimension in the form of new folk music programs – namely, two regional folk songbooks and the Northwest Folklife Festival (NFF). These projects were products of collaborative relationships between government entities and folk music communities that celebrated shared culture and history, stimulated community involvement, and relied on an ethos that prioritized participation, diversity, and connection. Federal and state government involvement in folk music programs could appear at odds with values of the American folk music revival, in conflict with artistic authenticity and political activism. However, government funding and support of folk culture, spurred by a federal push to return power to states and a renewed national interest in folk traditions, shaped a new kind of folk music middleman. Indeed, government institutions and folk music insiders interpreted folk culture and expanded the influence of local folk music communities. *The Rainy Day Song Book* and *Washington Songs and Lore,* two songbooks supported by government funding, in addition to the NFF, were intermediaries between folk culture and the general public. They were also contested sites of control over state narrative and identity, and the influence of various stakeholders affected the degree to which the projects were fully representative of Northwest culture and tradition. Variable in impact, state-sponsored folk programs facilitated the shift of folk culture to official culture, where local government, institutions, and communities embraced Northwest folk traditions as official markers of identity and belonging.

The Rainy Day Song Book, 1978

In a 1979 letter, Frances Campbell, a resident of Olympia, WA, wrote to the Whatcom County Museum in order to obtain a copy of the recently published *The Rainy Day Song Book.*

Campbell commended Linda Allen, the Bellingham-based folk musician and song collector responsible for the songbook, as a "very talented person," and noted that the museum, "or rather our state, should be encouraged to have her continue using her talents wherever needed." Beyond this praise, Campbell argued that because "we are a young state, growing older tho [sic]" it is prudent that the state seeks "out our heritage in song, history, etc. before the sources are gone."[256] This moment encapsulates a few key elements occurring in Northwest folk music culture during this time. Firstly, it points to a recognition held within the public that folk music was a viable and diminishing source of shared heritage and history. Secondly, it illustrates a belief that a responsibility to preserve Washington state folk music, and public history by extension, fell to state government. Finally, this letter demonstrates the importance and role of individuals like Linda Allen who contributed to the contextualization, preservation, and publication of a shared past. These ideas informed the public during the 1970s and 80s, when folk music communities in Western Washington benefited from a federal and state interest in supporting American folk culture. In Seattle and Bellingham, government dollars funded two Northwest folk songbooks: *The Rainy Day Song Book* (1978) and *Washington Songs and Lore* (1989). Conceptualized and produced by folk music insiders, these songbooks assembled regional folk songs for the enjoyment and use of the Washington state public. As representations of a Pacific Northwest past, these songbooks constructed versions of regional history and identity and depended on successful collaborative relationships between folk music insiders and the state.

The Rainy Day Song Book (*TRDS*), published in 1978, was the earliest Washington state songbook to utilize federal funding. Collected and edited by Linda Allen, *TRDS* relied on

[256] Letter from Frances Campbell to the Whatcom County Museum, 23 May 1979, XOE_CPNWS0354, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers, 1978-2018, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA.

Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds for financial support.[257] A federal program enacted in 1973, CETA's mission was to "provide job training and employment for the nation's economically disadvantaged by funneling federal money through state and local governments."[258] CETA funding opportunities followed on the tail of federal block grants, established in 1966 to similarly redistribute power by transferring partial decision-making authority to state and local governments. The federal government stated that federal block grants allowed state government to address "broad purposes, such as community development, social services, public health, or law enforcement" without the restrictions and requirements of categorical grants. Federal stipulations did specify the program's parameters but granted greater flexibility in the use of funds and placed power in the hands of state and local government officials who were both "closer to the people" and more "visible to the public."[259] The transfer of control from federal to state government reflected a larger shift to restore greater state power under the banner of New Federalism.

Block grants and CETA funding meant that states were fiscally accountable for their new responsibilities, which had the adverse effect of contributing to state debt. Nevertheless, they distributed funds to independent artists and individuals in Washington state, like Linda Allen, who undertook projects that were designed to serve the public.[260] Folk music, or music in general, was

[257] Another notable regional folk music enterprise of the time utilized CETA and NEA funding, John Ullman and Irene Namkung's artist management company Traditional Arts Services (TAS). Ullman and Namkung first operated under the moniker Traditional Arts Booking Service as part of the Seattle Folklore Society, which was a registered non-profit, and received NEA grants and CETA funding. When they "went off on [their] own as for-profit," they were called Traditional Arts Services and received funding from other sources. The NEA money allowed TAS to "tour artists over a wide area and it broke us into a lot of venues so that we couldn't have gotten into otherwise, [and] it gave us the money to go to these booking conferences," John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[258] CETA was repealed in 1982 and replaced by the Job Training Partnership Act. P-I Staff and News Services, "Money May Have to be Returned," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 20, 1986, A6.
[259] Congressional Research Service, "Block Grants: Perspectives and Controversies," Updated November 4, 2022, https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R40486.pdf, 2, 8.
[260] "Federal-State Relations Today: Back to States' Rights?" American Government, ushistory.org, accessed February 21, 2023, https://www.ushistory.org/gov/3c.asp.

not the only cultural domain to benefit from CETA funds. A 1979 *Seattle Daily Times* article credited CETA for revitalizing Seattle's visual arts scene by bringing "many young artists together in public commissions to work with organizations" thus providing them "more exposure." Between 1973 and 1975, there were more than 178 CETA artists who worked an average of one year on subsistence wages, mostly sponsored by educational or social-service organizations.[261] In 1978, Linda Allen was aware of CETA grants, and already having had the idea for a regional folk songbook, "wrote it up as a project" that was subsequently accepted as a recipient. Bellingham's history museum, the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, acted as publisher, and a local nonprofit entity called Old Day Creek Road, Inc. provided necessary nonprofit sponsorship.[262] Over the course of six months, Allen used her connections within folk music communities across the region to collect and compile folk songs. Allen was connected with the Seattle Folklore Society and met "with them fairly regularly [in] its song circles." She used these social events as opportunities to start "asking people, you know, what do you know, what do you remember about songs or singers" in Bellingham and Whatcom County specifically.[263] Allen had also already established the Apple Jam Folk Center in Olympia, WA, and another folk music community center, the Sunnyside, in Chehalis, WA. In other words, her connections spanned the state and she utilized her social network to track down "good singable songs which reflect the Northwest experience."[264] Early in the process, Allen wrote to John and Sally Ashford, an established couple in the Seattle folk music community, to inquire about possible folk music contacts, women's songs, traditional

[261] Mayumi Tsutakawa, "More public art, more interest in art during '70s," *Seattle Daily Times*, December 30, 1979, D5. Recipients of CETA were not without controversy. In 1985, two business owners were sentenced for misusing CETA dollars for personal gain, "2 Sentenced for Diverting Funds," *The Seattle Times,* February 10, 1985, E6.
[262] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021. It appears that CETA funding required sponsorship by a registered non-profit. In this case, Allen coordinated with "some friends" from non-profit Old Day Creek Road, Inc., although they "weren't really involved" in the process beyond providing a name and non-profit designation.
[263] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[264] Letter from Linda Allen to Larry and Laura, 12 April 1978, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers.

songs, and the possibility of advertising in the Seattle Folklore Society newsletter or journal.[265] In a similar vein, Allen contacted folksinger Jon Bartlett in Vancouver to ask after regional folk songs and whether or not he could "put a note in [his folk music] Bulletin requesting folks who know traditional Northwest songs (particularly about Washington)."[266] Allen extended her reach beyond folk music friends and acquaintances and contacted strangers that may have had possible connections to obscure Washington folk songs. In one letter, Allen wrote to probable descendants of one "Mr. and Mrs. Krall, who had settled in the Olympic Peninsula in 1912," in pursuit of a song called "Quinault Lake" that "was sung in a yodeling style, and was accompanied by an accordion."[267] In another letter, Allen contacted Inge Wessels in Vancouver, BC, a woman who could provide songs related to her unique experience as a cook on Northwest tugboats. Allen grumbled how her "collection right now seems to have so many songs about lumbermen and fishermen and miners – I need a feminine viewpoint!"[268] With the assistance of CETA funds, Allen cannily navigated her personal connections within the folk music community, conducted competent historical research, and framed her conclusions within a feminist perspective. This work contributed to and shaped the public knowledge of "our heritage in song, history, etc."

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[265] Letter from Linda Allen to John and Sally Ashford, 21 March 1978, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers. John Ashford was the son of folk song collector and friend of Pete Seeger and Ivar Haglund, Paul Ashford. John Ashford was the president of the Seattle Folklore Society for a period of time. Bob Nelson, "About John & Sally Ashford," Bob Nelson Collection of Folk Music: John & Sally Ashford, accessed December 20, 2022, https://guides.lib.uw.edu/c.php?g=341882&p=2304573.

[266] Letter from Linda Allen to John Bartlett, 21 March 1978, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers.

[267] Letter from Linda Allen to Michael and Ronald Krall, 26 July 1978, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers.

[268] Letter from Linda Allen to Inge Wessels, 26 July 1978, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers. Allen's work in collecting and developing folk songs by women, and creating programming on women's history (specifically her "Here's to the Women" show) deserves its own treatment. lindasongs.com is a valuable resource to learn more about her work. As a side note, in Bellingham in the late 70s there was a women's song group that met bi-weekly, where each meeting "had a theme such as work songs, lullabyes [sic], 'apron songs', etc." Letter from Linda Allen to John and Sally Ashford, 21 March 1978, Linda Allen Papers.

The Rainy Day Song Book represented Washington state history through folk music, and declared as much in its first few pages. The introduction explicitly outlined its mission, which was to present "songs which portray some of the characters and events which have shaped this beautiful Northwest country...songs to remind us of the struggles of our ancestors; songs to keep us in touch with our unique joys and sorrows as residents of the Northwest." *TRDS* explained its role as a cultural conduit to the past, remarking that the songs "will bring you closer to your particular history."[269] The scope of the project extended beyond folk musicians and included a plan to distribute the songbook to "the schools and libraries of Whatcom County."[270] As established, many Northwest folk songs celebrated a connection to the natural landscape and the rugged individualism of early settlers. In this way, traditional folk songs like "The Old Settler" and "Little Cabin in the Cascade Mountains" communicated a "collective pride" in the symbolic power of the settler experience, and a tendency to want to cling to associations with perseverance and claims to land. For Allen, "The Old Settler" provided a different reading, a "kind of a complaint...shaped by the environment of this area...[where] rain is such a huge part of the challenge of the environment." Instead of a romanticized celebration of Northwest settler histories, Allen wrote that the "The Old Settler" "sounded very real, like somebody who was living it and dealing with those situations" of failure, struggle, and disappointment.[271] To this end, Allen did not frame "The Old Settler" as a venerated tale of pioneer triumph, but contextualized the tune as an honest portrayal of a typical relationship to the Northwest landscape, the challenges of which made up a foundational element of the regional experience. Allen's explanation for including "The Old Settler" illustrates the

[269] Linda Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book* (Bellingham: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1978), iii.
[270] Letter from Linda Allen to Michael and Ronald Krall, 26 July 1978, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers.
[271] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.

development of a new attitude toward the role of folk song: to complicate, rather than maintain, ideals of the past.

The song selection and accompanying text in *TRDS* exposes changing attitudes and approaches to Indigenous representation in Northwest folk music. The rationale to include or exclude Coast Salish songs in the songbook also indicates the limits of folk music ideologies during the late 1970s. For example, Allen's decision to omit "Native-American ballads out of respect for the private and spiritual nature of Indian songs" suggests a level of sensitivity or awareness. Allen included the 1977 folk song "As Long as the Grass Shall Grow" by Oregon resident Twila Scofield, the words of which "were inspired by Native American speeches...by two Northwest Indian leaders: Nez Perce Chief Joseph and Chief Dan George."[272] The song, from our current perspective, represents certain stereotypes and issues that result when Indigenous culture is packaged by non-Native individuals or entities. For example, the practice of a non-Indigenous artist appropriating, paraphrasing, and re-framing text from Indigenous speeches would not be considered ethical. The lyrical content casts Coast Salish tribes as conglomerate and flattens tribal distinctions, in addition to propagating myths like that of the "ecological Indian" and the notion that Coast Salish tribal life was entirely demolished by settlers when many traditions and ways of life are retained and practiced to this day. The song asserts that justice for Coast Salish peoples will "come again soon" but fails to acknowledge the fight for sovereignty on Indigenous terms.[273] Compared to "The Bold Northwestern Man," a much older ballad that imagines Coast Salish tribes

[272] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 14.
[273] See Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples* (Edmonton: Brush Education, 2018); Paul Jentz, *Seven Myths of Native American History* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2018). Anthropologist Shepard Krech III introduced the concept of the "ecological Indian" in *The Ecological Indian: myth and history* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1999), which examined the idealized view of the relationship between North American Indigenous tribes and the environment. For a contemporary discussion of Krech's ideas, see *Native Americans and the Environment: Perspectives on the Ecological Indian,* ed. Michael E. Harkin and David Rich Lewis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

as "bold savages with knives drawn in their hands...so desirous [of] your shipping to obtain," "As Long as the Grass Shall Grow" signified some form of progress.[274] It may have signified progressive values for non-Native folk singers, but nonetheless it communicated long-held assumptions in the absence of participation or collaboration with Northwest tribal representatives. As final arbiter of what was included in *TRDS*, Linda Allen undertook due diligence to enact fair representation. The shortcomings of *TRDS* were not due to any moral or ethical failure on her part. Instead, they represented systems of exclusion and racial discrimination that formed the foundation of Northwest communities and informed even the most progressive ideologies.

In the quest to embody shared experience in the Northwest, Allen turned to another kind of uncomfortable history. A number of folk songs in *The Rainy Day Song Book* reckoned with local tragedies to encourage a sense of collective history, reinforcing the particularities of and relationship to the Northwest environment. Under the heading "Tragedies," *TRDS* included three new or new versions of folk songs. The first, "The Ballad of the Shoemaker Family," mourned the deaths in one family following an overflow of the Cowlitz River sometime around the turn of the 20th century. Collected from Mossyrock resident Beef Williams, Allen reassembled this "original, unpublished" folk song with assistance from other folk singers and the Lewis County Historical Society. The mournful ballad conjured "warm winds on the Mount Rainier" that raised the banks of the river, when a "father's loving heart...filled with a noble thought" of crafting cedar boards into a raft. Unfortunately, "the raft did leap...as the water dashed 'round so cold" and the family parted, where finally "the mother was found on a bed of sand, one son had washed ashore, the daughter lodged upon a drift, and three they saw no more," lost somewhere along "that bright celestial shore." Allen writes that this song, of which "several versions have been recovered from

[274] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 3. The representation of Coast Salish traditions in folk songbooks of Washington state would resurface a decade later during the creation of *Washington Songs and Lore.*

the memories of local people" elicits "memory of loved ones lost in our waters...[and] filled many an eye with tears."[275] In this way, the dramatic re-telling of the demise of the Shoemaker family engaged both the performer and listeners as participants in local memory. "Blue Canyon Mine," the second in the same section and a 1974 composition with words and music by Marysville folk singer John Dwyer, evoked another local tragedy. This tune regaled the listener with the story of "a thunderous explosion at the Blue Canyon Mine near Lake Whatcom" that "ended the lives of twenty-three men" in 1895.[276] The final addition, "To Jennifer - Age 15" by Seattle singer-songwriter Maggie Savage, commemorated a more contemporary tragedy. Inspired by "a number of young women" who "disappeared from Lake Sammamish State Park...in the summer of 1975," the lyrics described the subsequent discovery of "hair and bones scattered all over the ground" and the resulting trauma for family and community members brought about by the murders.[277] By remembering and historicizing disasters and local tragedies, folk songs in *TRDS* were persuasive tools to fortify shared histories, memories, and experiences specific to the region. In a sense, these stories acknowledged a kind of traumatic nostalgia, situated in Northwest settings like the "little cabin in the mountains or peaceful summer beaches" that typically would have evoked a more sentimental set of associations.[278] Folk songs of tragedy were useful as stories that engendered cohesion and sentiments of resilience within communities.

Facilitated by federal support, *The Rainy Day Song Book* positioned folk songs as representative of the "spirit of the place" by inscribing stories of the character, history, and

[275] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 32-33.
[276] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 34-35.
[277] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 36-37.
[278] Allen, *The Rainy Day Song Book,* 55. Clearly tragedy was not the only form of nostalgia at work here. In a letter to Linda Allen, one participant wrote that the songs in *The Rainy Day Song Book* brought up memories of her "earliest childhood, as my mother sang it to me as she tucked me into bed at night" and of "school songs" taught by the teacher and "sung in unison by our whole fourth grade class." Letter from Arta Lawrence to Linda Allen, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers.

experience of "the people." The songbook represented a particularly Northwestern "place," with little attention paid to qualities of geography or culture on the other side of the Cascades. Although Allen was concerned with representation, the songbook failed to represent a full spectrum of Northwest communities and identities. As of 1979, songbook sales were going well, and the new exposure it generated had created renewed interest in certain folk songs.[279] For example, Twila Scofield's "As Long as the Grass Shall Grow" became "quite popular" in Bellingham, as Allen sang "it every concert, and so [did Bellingham folk singers] Larry Hanks and Laura Smith."[280] With the help of federal dollars, Allen collected and compiled usable pasts in the form of folk music. This effort increased exposure to Northwest folk songs, which in turn formalized regional markers of identity based in equally distinct and incomplete conceptions of place and belonging. *The Rainy Day Song Book* was not the only folk songbook project that acted as a mechanism to reinforce concepts of Washington's shared past. It would prove to be a precursor to Allen's later collaboration with state government to produce an official songbook in celebration of the 1989 Washington Centennial.

Washington Songs and Lore, 1989

A decade after the publication of *The Rainy Day Song Book,* Allen embarked on another project to create a songbook emblematic of Washington state. *Washington Songs and Lore,* published in 1989, was a collaborative effort between Allen, regional folksingers, folklorists, state representatives, and the Washington Centennial Commission (WCC). Compared to *The Rainy Day*

[279] Letter from Linda Allen, 5 October 1979, box 1, folder "RDSB Recording Rights 1979 1/1," Linda Allen Papers. Musicians who contributed songs to the songbook had the option to retain royalties of $0.0275 per tape sold, or could opt to donate royalties to the Whatcom Museum.
[280] Letter from Linda Allen to Twila Scofield, box 1, folder "RDSB Correspondence 1978-1988 + undated 1/2," Linda Allen Papers.

Song Book, the production of *Washington Songs and Lore* (*WSAL*) was wider in scope, involved a formal committee, and required a more rigorous and systematic song collection and selection process. Where *The Rainy Day Song Book* published folk songs and ballads exclusively, *WSAL* was not only "a collection of traditional (folk) songs" but included songs "more properly classified as popular."[281] *Washington Songs and Lore* relied on state funding and sponsorship; however, the final result was a version of Washington state history generated by folk music and cultural insiders. As much as the songbook was a site of contention over historical narratives, it was equally a site where citizens made government dollars work towards their own account of state history and experience. These individual efforts, progressive and deeply concerned with fair representation, were restricted by ongoing forces of marginalization that limited the ability of *WSAL* to truly represent Washington state history and identity.

Washington Songs and Lore had its roots in a resolution adopted by the Washington state legislature in 1982 that formed the Washington Centennial Commission. The WCC, whose purpose was to organize, fund and coordinate events, art, and publications in honor of one hundred years of Washington statehood, was financed with $157 million of state money. Executive secretary Putnam Barber led the WCC, which was co-chaired by First Lady Jean Gardner and secretary of state Ralph Munro.[282] In accordance with the law, Representative Dick Nelson "spearheaded the Centennial Songbook Project, which resulted in [another] resolution being passed that called for the publishing of a songbook that reflected [Washington state] musical heritage."[283] *Washington Songs and Lore* was not the only book published in celebration of the

[281] *Washington Songs and Lore* review, *Northwest Folklore* 7, no. 1, (Fall 1988): 48.
[282] "WAC 100-100-010, The Washington centennial commission – Description," accessed February 21, 2023, https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=100-100-010;
"Washington Centennial Commission," accessed February 21, 2023, https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w68124hs.
[283] "Facts About the Centennial Songbook," box 2, folder "WSAL Promotion 1988 2/3," Linda Allen Papers.

state Centennial. A December 1989 *Seattle Times* article described the "parade of books" from "history books to picture books to cookbooks" released around this time, some but not all of which were produced in collaboration with the Commission.[284] The WCC included other committees ranging from the Maritime Committee and the Native American Committee to Centennial committees at the county level. Together, committees across the state planned and organized air shows, sporting games, opening day festivities, and a visit by then-President George H.W. Bush to Spokane.[285] The fact that Centennial festivities celebrated a literal history of colonization in the region did not preclude Indigenous tribes from contributing to programming and appearing at Centennial events. Not only was the first Tribal Canoe Journey (or "Paddle to Seattle") held in conjunction with Centennial celebrations, but the same year saw state and tribal government sign the Centennial Accord in official recognition of Indigenous sovereignty.[286] In this sense, the development of *WSAL* took place in a context of increased awareness of representation in addition to efforts to ameliorate the wrongs of the past. The ability of *WSAL* to contribute to this undertaking depended on the inner workings of the songbook committee amid influence from the public, state representatives, and the songbook publishers.

Committee Process

WSAL did not represent a static, exclusively state vision of history despite the fact that it was funded by state government and initiated under the mission to honor Washington's statehood. Instead, it was the sum of individual motivations, opinions, and beliefs of songbook committee

[284] Donn Fry, "Centennial Books Offer Vivid Detail," *The Seattle Times,* December 12, 1989, L7.
[285] "Washington Centennial Commission," accessed February 21, 2023, https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w68124hs.
[286] Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, "Centennial Accord," accessed February 21, 2023, https://goia.wa.gov/relations/centennial-accord.

members led by Linda Allen. Allen first became involved with the Centennial Commission through a standard job application and quickly began her work collecting and compiling prospective songs to present to fellow committee members.[287] Wilfred Woods, editor of the *Wenatchee World,* chaired the songbook committee, which included teachers, musicians, music educators, a state representative, Jens Lund (the official state folklorist), and Putnam Barber, the Centennial Commission's executive secretary. Allen recruited experts in folk music and folklore, like Lund, that she believed could help educate a "member, or maybe two, who are very suspicious of 'folk.'"[288] Allen helped guide the development of the songbook from the earliest efforts, although it was the Centennial Commission that had the power to make the final songbook committee member selections. Once formalized, the committee met regularly, typically at the home of Putnam Barber, to listen to tapes and evaluate song titles for almost two years.[289] As a means of discovering new folk music material, Allen traveled around the state to hold song sharing workshops, where community members contributed "songs that might have had to do with Washington State, songs they'd written or songs they'd heard."[290] Like her work in compiling *The Rainy Day Song Book,* Allen utilized her personal contacts by writing to "all the folksingers [she] knew that had a Northwest connection and Northwest feel...not just contemporary songs...but [songs that] reached across the border...which included BC."[291] Allen also placed ads on local radio and in national print publications, and wrote to historical societies, museums, and galleries in

[287] During the creation of *WSAL,* Allen also toured for the Centennial Commission performing folk songs and helping "people write their own folk songs for their own regions of the state," for "anyone who hasn't watched too much television or listened to too much radio can write a folk song." Vance Horne, "Sing out, Washington!" *The Olympian,* November 8, 1988.
[288] Linda Allen to Jens Lund, 4 February 1986, box 3, folder "Jens Lund (Folklife Council) and Linda Allen correspondence, 1983-87 3/5," Linda Allen Papers.
[289] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* ix-xi.
[290] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[291] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.

pursuit of Northwest folk songs.[292] These efforts led to a high volume of submissions. In sifting through the extensive options, Allen felt a responsibility to accurately represent the geographical and cultural breadth of the Northwest region. Specifically, she recognized how important it was to devote attention to Washington history on the east side of the Cascade Mountains to craft a complete picture.[293] The concern for accuracy and diversity of representation extended to other members of the songbook committee and was built into the selection process.

The overseeing of the songbook project by Washington state government belied a grassroots approach to creating *WSAL,* one that was methodical and designed to consider broad questions of representation. The process of song selection was a nuanced collaboration between folk musicians, government employees, and folklorists with varied and sometimes opposing perspectives. As Allen brought folk song candidates to the table for review, the committee developed a working process to discuss and select songs. Between regular reports to Putnam Barber, Allen sent tapes and worksheets to committee members that provided opportunity for comment alongside a formal rating system. After Allen received the numerical scores from committee members, she presented the findings to the group during meetings, and Barber calculated an average score for each. From these rankings, the committee considered which songs Allen should focus further efforts upon to document, verify, and annotate.[294] A response sheet for "Tape 3 – Sea Songs" shows both consensus and disagreement in terms of song quality, cultural value, and relevance. Committee members utilized a rating from one to five, one being the most

[292] There was an item seeking Northwest folk songs in "Sing Out!" in 1986, as stated in Ruth Burnstein to Linda Allen, 6 June 1986. An announcement also aired on KTAC Radio seeking original Northwest songs, Craig Bohan to Linda Allen, 28 July 1986, box 4, folder "Correspondence 1986 July-Dec 4/2," Linda Allen Papers. See also box 4, folder "Correspondence 1979, 1985, 1986 Feb-June 4/1." It also appears that Lund had an active habit of mailing Allen postcards and letters with song tips, references, names, and other resources, as evident in box 4, folder "Jens Lund (Folklife Council) and Linda Allen correspondence 1983-87 3/5."
[293] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[294] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee Meeting – September 12, 1986," box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," 1, Linda Allen Papers.

appealing and five indicating complete rejection. For example, members agreed that the "Gooey Duck Song," which rated 1's across the board (with an errant 1.5), was "catchy and great! Definitely a classic! Really fun! School kids would like – a contemporary classic! Great fun to sing!" The ratings for "Blackball Ferry Line," best known as a 1951 Bing Crosby recording, ranged widely. Respondents noted that the tune was "bad enough to be good" and "too dated" but "a classic." Both songs made it into the final songbook.[295] The initial reactions of committee members, their initial brush with consensus or disagreement, was the first step in a deliberate process of inscribing state identity.

In navigating a balance between personal taste and greater appeal, committee members assessed songs for singability, controversy, length, comprehensibility, entertainment value, and longevity. The remarks and ratings in these evaluations illustrate how individual attitudes, politics, and experiences influenced the perceived suitability of folk songs. Matters of artistic taste informed many initial responses. For example, respondents considered "Wreck of the J.C. Cousins" to be a milquetoast tune that was "unclear...wierd [sic]" with a "'haunting' quality" that nevertheless "didn't hold interest."[296] Beyond aesthetic appeal, the committee utilized their cultural expertise to monitor for offensive or politically incorrect content, questioning whether or not the "ethnicity [was] genuine" in "Bullwhacker's Song," which was a "good dialect song" but also "a bit on the ethnic slur side." Committee members deployed technical musical knowledge to assess what constituted a quality folk song and delineated which songs were "structurally sound" with a "nice chorus" from those with a "one-note melody" and "hard to understand words."[297] Naturally, the relevance of material to Washington state history and culture was of particular concern. The

[295] "Tape 3 - Sea Songs," box 2, folder "Songbook committee corr. 1985-87 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.
[296] "Tape 3 - Sea Songs," Linda Allen Papers.
[297] "Tape 3 - Sea Songs," Linda Allen Papers.

"Shake Rat Song," described in committee worksheets as a logging song, had an "authentic spirit" but was "too W. Virginia" and gleaned unenthusiastic scores. Although praised for its adherence to folk music authenticity, it failed to summon appropriate impressions of the Northwest. In opposition to this, "Wet Me Down in Washington" was rated highly as a "clever," albeit "corny," song admired for the fact that it "focuses on Washington." The committee thought it was "much better than "Wash. My Home" due to the "engaging" and "well-constructed" way it evoked Washington state's primary meteorological feature.[298] In some cases, matters of regional historical importance trumped personal taste. Washington state folklorist Jens Lund thought that "Bow Down to Washington" should "perhaps be included for the sake of its importance" regardless of his opinion that it wasn't "a very good song."[299] A University of Washington fight song, it was included because it captured "the school's fighting spirit" and exalted the "glory of Washington forever."[300] For committee members, it was of utmost importance to encourage feelings of regional pride in Washington's "glory," regardless of the fact that the song wasn't stylistically or technically any good. This meticulous process of song selection was the cornerstone of *WSAL* and was necessary to create what the committee understood to be a cohesive, relatable, and historically accurate representation of Washington state. In songbook committee meetings, Allen reminded her fellow committee members of the importance of "detailed comments and evaluations," crucial responses that reduced the "truly overwhelming...volume of material" and constructed the most accurate and appealing portrait of Washington state.[301]

[298] "Tape 1 - Logging Songs," box 2, folder "Songbook committee corr. 1985-87 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.
[299] Jens Lund notes #9, 3, box 2, folder "Songbook committee corr. 1985-87 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.
[300] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 69, 77.
[301] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee, Friday, August 8, 1986," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.

Committee meetings were forums that provided opportunity for discussion and clarification of "the criteria for including songs in the book."[302] In part an avenue for Putnam Barber and Allen to present the committee's consensus, the formal meetings also allowed for new song exploration and collaboration amongst the group. In a meeting in August of 1986, the committee heard a breadth of new material for review, including two beer commercial jingles from Olympia and Rainier beer. In attendance was Mark Dempsey, a volunteer who worked with the sheet music collection of the Museum of History and Industry. Dempsey performed several Washington songs including the jazz standard "Hindustan" and the "The Dradl Song," written by Rabbi Goldfarb of Temple de Hirsch in Seattle. During the meeting, Barber reinforced the idea that it wasn't "necessary to be completely representative of all styles or to document the music history of the state," a reminder that the mission of the songbook was to celebrate a broad sense of Washington statehood and identity and not to provide a comprehensive history.[303] A letter from Barber to Allen also reflected this idea, where Barber worried about the addition of "songs that exist only on sheet music and are in styles that have fallen out of favor," like "ostrich feather waltzes and quasi-military hometown marches" that "aren't part of people's musical consciousness today." Barber eventually capitulated that "the best of those materials...needs to be in our book."[304] The debate between committee members surrounding representation was an ongoing dialogue testing the limits of inclusion, a push and pull of conflicting opinions and vested interests.

The songbook committee expressed concern over hypothetical governmental intervention, even though there was not much explicit direction from the Centennial Commission. They also

[302] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee Meeting – March 27, 1986," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.
[303] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee, Friday, August 8, 1986," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.
[304] Putnam Barber to Linda Allen, 1 December 1986, box 2, folder "Corr. chiefly with centennial commission members 1985-91 2/4," Linda Allen Papers.

acknowledged the likelihood that disparate or inflammatory political opinions may be present in the final songbook, to the dismay of the WCC. In a committee meeting in 1986, members voiced "concern...over the possibility that the Legislature would try to dictate songs to be included or that the Committee would be pressed to conform to a narrow standard of acceptability." Representative Dick Nelson, attempting to assuage these concerns, stated that "the recent session had got the message across that the Legislature shouldn't try to edit the book." Some members acknowledged in jest that the songbook committee's "goal had been to offend everyone equally" and that some level of political disagreement was inevitable. Regardless, they believed that "the [Centennial] Commission would expect a book of good songs even if they weren't all politically neutral."[305] For their own part, state representatives demonstrated an awareness of the power of Washington state folk songs to influence their constituents. In a letter to Dick Nelson, Secretary of State Ralph Munro requested a "super good list of Washington music" that they "could make good use of...on November 11," which was Statehood Day.[306] Munro hoped to distribute the list to local disc jockeys, who could broadcast the songs to cultivate civic pride and enthusiasm for the state. For some government officials, Northwest folk songs and *WSAL* specifically could bolster their own pet political projects by influencing voters. In 1986, State Representative Dean Sutherland (D) threw his hat in the *WSAL* ring and wrote to Putnam Barber requesting that the song "Our State is a Dumpsite," an original by Northwest folksinger Dana Lyons, be included in "the official state song book." Sutherland argued that the song was "a unique way to reach the public about a very serious issue – what to do with nuclear waste," the focus of Sutherland's recent appearance at a

[305] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee Meeting – March 27, 1986," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.
[306] Letter from Ralph Munro to Dick Nelson, 10 September 1985, box 2, folder "Songbook committee correspondence, 1985-87 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.

rally on the Capitol steps in Olympia.[307] With vested interest in the cause, Sutherland understood "Our State is a Dumpsite" was a means to extend his political platform and reach. To this end, he "co-sponsored a house resolution with 14 others to include 'Dumpsite' in the state song book."[308] Sutherland's push for Lyon's song generated considerable publicity and reveals his recognition of folk song as a device for influence in his own political undertakings. His efforts to include the song in *WSAL* also reveals the songbook as a politicized site capable of reflecting and manipulating attitudes in the civic space.

Sutherland was not the only individual or organization with a stake in "Our State is a Dumpsite." Lyons capitalized on the song's popularity, using the press and attention to bolster three tours with the song, including a cross-country tour to educate the public on the dangers of nuclear waste.[309] Furthermore, around this time the Washington Public Interest Research Group (WashPIRG) adopted "Our State is a Dumpsite" as the theme song for its recent campaign, titled "Don't Sacrifice Washington," against the construction of a nuclear waste repository at Hanford.[310] Green Peace, The Sierra Club, the Hanford Oversite Committee, and the National Audubon Society all offered letters of support to make the "Our State is a Dumpsite" Washington's state

[307] Dean Sutherland to Putnam Barber, 31 March 1986, box 5, folder "Dana Lyons correspondence, newspaper articles 1985-1987," Linda Allen Papers.
[308] This was in March of 1986, though the resolution died in committee, Dana Lyons to Linda Allen, 14 April 1987, box 5, folder "Dana Lyons correspondence, newspaper articles 1985-1987," Linda Allen Papers.
[309] Dana Lyons to Linda Allen, 14 April 1987, Linda Allen Papers.
[310] Cathy Dillon, "Songwriter pokes fun at plan for nuclear waste repository," *Tri-City Herald.* WashPIRG still exists, and "is the Washington state affiliate of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (US-PIRG) Education Fund, a national left-progressive policy advocacy coalition within the Public Interest Network of left-of-center advocacy groups," founded in 1970 by Ralph Nader, "Washington State Public Interest Research Group (WASHPIRG) Foundation," Influence Watch, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/washington-state-public-interest-research-group-washpirg-foundation/. Public Interest Network (PIN) is "a collection of over one hundred left-wing nonprofit and for-profit organizations headed by Doug Phelps, a powerful Democratic Party political operative connected with the Democracy Alliance network of left-of-center donors. The network consists of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG), many state-level PIRGs, environmentalist group Environment America and its state-level chapters, and many other nonprofit advocacy groups. The network of groups has been dubbed “the Liberal Sweatshop” for its labor practices," "Public Interest Network (PIN)," Influence Watch, accessed December 20, 2022, https://www.influencewatch.org/organization/public-interest-network/.

song.[311] Ultimately rejected as the state song, it nonetheless made its way into *Washington Songs and Lore.* To her credit, in a response to Sutherland's request to include "Dumpsite" in *WSAL*, Allen, ever cognizant of balance in representation, wrote "please keep your ears open for other good songs...for balance, know any pro-nuclear dumpsite songs??!!??"[312]

While committee members were correct in predicting that the final version of *WSAL* surely contained material that wasn't "all politically neutral," significant meddling by the Legislature (outside of Representative Sutherland's efforts) never ensued. The Centennial Commission believed in the cultural value of *WSAL* as "a project with universal appeal" and let Putnam Barber, Linda Allen, and their fellow committee members dictate the scope of the project.[313] At the center of the creation of *WSAL* was representation and the committee's deliberations and final selections expose which material they believed to be "the most representative, as much as we could" of Washington state history, heritage, and identity.[314]

Visions of Washington State

In the introduction to *Washington Songs and Lore,* Wilfred Woods frames regional music as means to understand a shared past, as "the joy of song...will give all of us a perspective on our own state which can be enjoyed no other way."[315] Like *The Rainy Day Song Book,* creators of *WSAL* understood that folk songs activated concepts of the past for use in the present and transmitted shared cultural standards into the future. As an historical artifact in its own right, *WSAL*

[311] Dana Lyons to Linda Allen, 14 April 1987, Linda Allen Papers.
[312] Linda Allen to Dean Sutherland, 16 April 1986, box 5, folder "Dana Lyons correspondence, newspaper articles 1985-1987," Linda Allen Papers.
[313] Letter from Jean Gardner, Co-chairman WCC, and Ralph Munro, WCC Co-chairman and Secretary of State to Linda Allen, 16 September 1987, box 2, folder "Corr. chiefly with centennial commission members 1985-91 2/4," Linda Allen Papers.
[314] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[315] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* ix.

suggests the shared beliefs of its creators. Their efforts to create a complete as possible work, informed by progressive values and folk music principles, indicates the potential and limits of these guiding ideologies.

Throughout the songbook construction process, members paid careful attention to issues of cultural and racial representation, especially as it pertained to Northwest Indigenous history. As committee members worked to sift through over 469 songs, Allen filled in "the gaps in areas which have not been adequately represented...ethnic, Native-American, [and] religious" songs.[316] As it did in the development of *TRDS,* Linda Allen's political and social consciousness informed her selections. In one meeting, one of Allen's two objectives was to introduce "Indian songs she had found," of which "there was general agreement that something like these would be nice to include."[317] Allen took further steps to ensure accurate representation of Indigenous culture, and wrote to Vi Hilbert, a respected author, speaker, and tribal elder of the Upper Skagit, in pursuit of contributions. Allen also wrote to the Yakima Nation Cultural Center and requested "a short story or poem which might relate to the area or is important to the tribe, but which does not have problems of ownership or spiritual significance which would interfere with its publication."[318] Allen displayed a careful awareness of the importance of collaboration Northwest tribal leaders. Putnam Barber had a similar understanding of the importance of collaboration, noting the existence of an Ethnic Heritage Committee collection of songs "that have been important to the ethnic groups of Washington, where the editorial choices would be made by the leaders of each such group."[319]

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[316] Linda Allen to Putnam Barber, 19 December 1986, box 2, folder "Reports from LA to Putnam Barber, 1986-87 2/6," Linda Allen Papers.
[317] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee Meeting – September 12, 1986," 1, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.
[318] Linda Allen to Vi Hilbert, 28 January 1987; Linda Allen to Vivian Adams, Agnes Tulee, Yakima Nation Cultural Center, 28 January 1987, box 4, folder "Correspondence 1986 undated, 1987 4/3," Linda Allen Papers.
[319] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee Meeting – March 27, 1986," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.

Barber also contradicted this approach in his own notes, suggesting the addition of "Native American music that is accessible to non-Native American ears," prioritizing the interests of a non-Native audience or consumer base over accurate representation of Indigenous traditions. In his song selection notes, Jens Lund exposed his own attitudes towards Indigenous representation. For example, he wrote that "Heart of the Appaloosa" was "a good song about Indian-White issues" akin to "As Long As the Grass Shall Grow," which he considered to be "another good song about Ind-Wh. issues." Lund argued that "these songs should be included only, I think, if you included those real Indian songs."[320] Lund's characterization of "real Indian songs" was a reference to recordings of traditional music sung by Coast Salish individuals and shows how he understood the importance of accurate, or authentic, representation. Interestingly, he insisted that "Seattle Illahee" was "a must" as it "had lots of novelty as well as Chinook Jargon and [for] its historic context (& its naughtiness)."[321] Lund was correct in asserting that "Seattle Illahee" was one of the oldest Washington state songs, but in the end "Seattle Illahee" was not included in *Washington Songs and Lore.* This exclusion likely had more to do with the fact that the supposed "naughtiness" was questionable material for a publication distributed to elementary schools and less to do with the fact that including the song would mean highlighting experiences of male settlers in a Seattle brothel staffed mostly by Indigenous women.[322] In this way, songbook committee members considered norms of acceptability and appropriateness, and in the case of "Seattle Illahee," missed an opportunity to point out an early instance in the history of white-Indigenous relationships and power imbalances. When the songbook was nearly complete, the committee weighed in on final selections and organization of the songs. Several members supported naming a section featuring

[320] Jens Lund notes #9, 3, box 2, folder "Songbook committee corr. 1985-87 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.
[321] Jens Lund notes #9, 2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee corr. 1985-87 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.
[322] Thrush, *Native Seattle,* 40-41.

Native American songs "The Passing of the Old Ways." Committee members believed that this "separate, introductory section that made reference to their status as the first people of this region...[was] respectful of the Native Americans."[323] Ultimately, the committee titled this introductory section "My Native Land" and printed two Samish songs, "Welcome Song" and "The Traveling Canoe Song," alongside "Missionary's Farewell" and "The Old Settler." Acknowledging their "status as the first people of this region" was a meaningful nod to Coast Salish sovereignty. However, this format relegated the two Samish songs to a category firmly rooted to the past, silencing Indigenous presence and survivance.[324]

The limitations of progressive social values were similarly evident in committee members approaches to what they called "ethnic music," an imprecise category which generally referred to genres outside of the American folk music tradition. In committee meetings, "there was quite a bit of discussion of ethnic music," some of which related to Black music history in the Northwest. In one committee meeting, members questioned the authenticity of "some of the 'black' songs that have been suggested [and that] have an exaggerated stereotyping of language," and noted that this did not "fit with current approaches very well."[325] Allen argued for "Celebrate the Century," a "very upbeat" rock/blues song which she imagined would be performed by a gospel group "with a strong black singer as lead."[326] Despite this awareness, there is nothing in *Washington Songs and Lore* that celebrates or even denotes the certain existence of a rich history of music and

[323] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee Meeting – January 8, 1987," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.
[324] Gerald Vizenor, ed., *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). Survivance as a term undermines the "concocted images of the Indian" as essential victims. Survivance highlights the "dynamic, inventive, and enduring heart of Native cultures well beyond the colonialist trappings of absence, tragedy, and powerlessness."
[325] "1989 Washington Centennial Commission Songbook Committee, Friday, August 8, 1986," 1-2, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.
[326] Linda Allen to Putnam Barber, 5 December 1986, box 2, folder "Corr. chiefly with centennial commission members 1985-91 2/4," Linda Allen Papers.

performance in the region's Black community. The furthest *WSAL* goes to acknowledge local Black artists is under the heading "Pop Songs from Washington," which mentions Jimi Hendrix, Ray Charles, and Quincy Jones without providing any further information. This omission provides evidence to and reinforces the historic segregation and discrimination towards non-white communities in the region and silences a history of Black music in the Northwest. Because of the systematic exclusion of Seattle's Black population from not just hotels, neighborhoods, restaurants, and sections of the city center, but from music unions, theaters, and performances spaces as well, Black music was relegated to the urban fringes. In turn, this led Black musicians, who no longer had to "play to genteel white sensibilities," to form their own musical communities.[327] As early as 1864, Black entrepreneurs opened businesses that provided space for both Black and white Seattleites to listen to music, dance, and drink. As Seattle's Black population grew, Black jazz, swing, and orchestral bands multiplied. Many Black residents also made music "at home, at church, and at picnics and other group functions."[328] During and after WWII, when opportunity motivated thousands of Black southern residents to migrate north, Seattle went from a city that was "simply not a blues town" to one that had, as stated by historian Quintard Taylor, "a decidedly southern ambiance." In the second half of the 20th century, Black R&B, jazz, blues bands, soul, funk, and gospel flourished in Seattle and was featured on local Black radio stations KZAM and KYAC.[329] Under these circumstances, it is surprising that none of this rich history is represented in *Washington Songs and Lore.* The same glaring omission applied to other non-white groups, including Northwest Chinese and Japanese communities. Although the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943, Seattle of the 1920s and 30s had a sizable Chinese population

[327] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 73.
[328] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 68.
[329] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 270. See 270-282 for Armbruster's discussion of music by Black Seattleites in the second half of the 20th century.

that brought their musical traditions, especially Chinese opera, into the city. The Luck Ngi Musical Society attracted Seattle's Chinese community to "discuss business, play games, and perform Cantonese opera and songs into the wee hours" and became the oldest and largest Chinese organization in the city.[330] During the 1930s, the population of Japanese Americans in Seattle expanded to over 8,000, despite the fact it was illegal for them to become naturalized citizens or own property. New Japanese immigrants established the Seattle Japanese Buddhist Temple in 1901, a center for traditional music, followed by the Society of the Lotus and the Nippon Kan Theater in 1909. The Nippon Kan Theater presented traditional Japanese orchestra, Kabuki performances, and dance for the next three decades. During the Depression, Japanese music flourished but the mass displacement and internment of people of Japanese descent during WWII ended the renaissance of traditional Japanese culture in Seattle, at least until the post-war period.[331] By omitting defining elements of Washington state history that could have been related through the state's musical history – immigration histories, contributions to Seattle music and culture on the part of minority groups, realities of Japanese American internment – *WSAL* only goes so far to truly reflect "Washington and its people."[332] The *WSAL* songbook committee may have spent significant time discussing "ethnic music," and Allen, to her credit, fought with publishers to include music from Washington's Hispanic community and publicly voiced dismay over the omission of content related to the Japanese American experience. Regardless, the lack of representative music from all of Washington state's residents produced historical silences and undermined the principles of committee members.

[330] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 130.
[331] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 131-32. Another missing figure from *Washington Songs and Lore* is Pat Suzuki, a popular nightclub singer and Japanese American performer who started her career at the Colony Club in Seattle in 1955. She went on to record several albums and act on Broadway, 180.
[332] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* xi.

The responses of songbook committee members uncover how individual attitudes towards class and gender shaped the project. For example, Lund's self-confessed "class consciousness" influenced his selections and opinions on the suitability of certain songs. In a single page of evaluations, Lund sarcastically said that he supposed "the rich folks need to be represented" via a tune about the excitements of yachting called "Opening Day in Bellingham Bay." He also railed against "Cap'n Maybe," giving it a low-scoring 5 and expressing distaste at "the way they've turned a rich man's sport into a song that sounds like a real maritime danger-ballad."[333] Lund's class consciousness was not the only element evident here. His remarks illustrate the persisting understanding of folk music authenticity connected to an idealization of working-class struggle, ideals which formed the foundation of his understanding of the inherent value of certain songs. A dialogue surrounding gender and representation also made its way into song evaluations. The song "Slime Line," a labor song sung by women, scored favorably. Committee members celebrated it on account of its representation of "the womyn's perspective - low wages and all" that was "especially good because it's a woman's song for a change." Committee member Bob Cathey acknowledged that it was "really unique" and valuable because "it does acknowledge that women work in fisheries too."[334] "Slime Line" did not make it into the final version of *WSAL.* Instead, a Linda Allen original titled "Rosy The Riveter – Revisited" stood in as the sole representation for women's work in Washington state. A nod to the women here, a scoff at the rich there, the rationales, opinions, and arguments of song selectors show the influence of diversity in a project which featured a relatively small selection of Washington state experience. The dialogues surrounding race, class and gender in songbook committee notes indicate which narratives of

[333] "Jens Lund's Evaluations of Tape #11," box 2, folder "Song evaluations for tapes 9, 11, 6 1986 2/8," Linda Allen Papers.
[334] Song evaluation sheets, Jens Lund cassette #3, sea related; Unknown participant cassette #3; Bob Cathey cassette #3, sea related, box 2, folder "Song evaluations for tapes 2, 3, 8, 10 1986 2/11," Linda Allen Papers.

history stakeholders valued highest, and how certain values helped shape *WSAL*'s brand of regional identity. The songbook committee members were constrained by their own experience and ideologies, yet the failure to include a wider selection of experience and history was not for lack of vision or some moral fault. The omission of certain histories in *WSAL* speaks more to the long history of division and marginalization of minority groups in Washington state and how entrenched structures of power functioned and perpetuated in the civic imagination.

WSAL wrapped and was ready to be sent to the publishers as of June 21, 1987, though this did not signal the end of the editing process.[335] As *WSAL* came closer to a final version, contentious exchanges between Allen and the publishing house, Melior Publishing, positioned the songbook as a site of disagreement over historical narrative. In a letter to members of the songbook committee, Allen responded to changes made by Melior and stated that "most of the chapters now have introductions and conclusions which are not those I wrote – or would have written." This included the omission of material which Allen considered to be important and left her "shocked to see the book in its present form." Part of the issue was that the Centennial Commission considered Allen contractually to be the "compiler" rather than the author. To the Centennial Commission, Melior was under no obligation to consult Allen in lieu of rewrites. In frustration, Allen "submitted to Melior extensive notes requesting changes which would...result in a work more like my original vision." Allen expressed her belief to the songbook committee that this was "an issue of fairness and integrity" which required their support and action to resolve.[336] Allen's peers, namely Jens Lund, came to her defense. In a letter to the Centennial Commission, Lund expressed dismay at

[335] Letter from Linda Allen to Putnam Barber, 21 June 1987, box 2, folder "reports from LA to Putnam Barber, 1986-87 2/6," Linda Allen Papers. Allen notes in this letter that the final manuscript was ready to be sent to Melior Publications.
[336] Letter from Linda Allen to Members of the Songbook Committee, 25 March 1988, box 2, folder "Songbook committee minutes 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.

the extent to which Melior had substantially changed Allen's manuscript, stating that the publisher had "completely rewritten the text" and that he had never "heard of a publisher taking such license with an author's draft." Lund was not only "shocked," but fervently hoped that "the Centennial Commission will not let them get away with it."[337] Lund's letter provides further evidence as to how Allen and other members of the songbook committee, the Centennial Commission, and Melior clashed in a power struggle over the narrative history of the state. This struggle indicates the confusion as to who should and did control this narrative. Melior claimed that Allen plagiarized text and their edits were necessary to tone down her wording because "the book is not a soap box." [338] Allen worked exhaustively to refute Melior's claims against her personally and professionally. In a lengthy document, Allen systematically detailed and responded to Melior's changes and claims. Allen's proposed amendments included the addition of "Ojala!," a song about migrant labor which she found was necessary to represent the Hispanic community in Washington, "a large percentage of our population."[339] A note from Melior in response to Allen remarks simply, "no space. not using Ojala."[340] Allen also compelled Melior to reinsert Native American songs and song sources, insisted on the important function of her text to express Indigenous resilience and rebirth, called into question certain stereotypes, and provided historical nuance and accuracy otherwise devoid from Melior's edits.[341] Melior accepted some of Allen's revisions and disregarded

[337] Jens Lund to Maura Craig, 23 March 1988, box 3, folder "Melior publications correspondence Dec 1987-Jan 1989 3/2," Linda Allen Papers.
[338] Melior to Putnam Barber, 31 March 1988, box 3, folder "Melior publications correspondence Dec 1987-Jan 1989 3/2," Linda Allen Papers.
[339] "Proposed Amendments to the Edited Text Introductions and Table of Contents, submitted to Melior Publications by Linda Allen, March 18, 1988," box 3, folder "Melior publications correspondence Dec 1987-Jan 1989 3/2," Linda Allen Papers.
[340] Notes for Revision of Text, 6 April 1988, box 3, folder "Melior publications correspondence Dec 1987-Jan 1989 3/2," Linda Allen Papers.
[341] For example, Allen provides biographical information for Chief Joseph (Nez Perce). She also quotes "The Heart of the Appaloosa" songwriter Fred Small, who stated that the Appaloosa were "an allegory of resurrection, of rebirth, of continued struggle after apparent annihilation," which works against the flattening of Indigenous narratives. Allen also wanted text added to deepen the function of labor songs, especially for women, and disagreed with the "stereotyped" characterization of loggers as strictly "sturdy, brave men." "Proposed Amendments to the

many others. The relationship frayed in the wake of Melior's claims of Allen's plagiarism, which Allen called "one of the most vicious personal attacks" she had ever experienced.[342] The songbook committee was able to avoid direct interference from the Legislature, although the final version of *WSAL* did not fully escape the editor's pen. Melior implemented its control to craft the book to best suit its own commercial and ideological vision. The conflict between Melior and Allen reveals the songbook as inscriber of history and narrative, as well as a site of contention over both, and speaks to the influence state-sanctioned folk culture held in the public imagination.

The collection of songs that made it through to print in *Washington Songs and Lore* were an assembly of concepts that committee members, the Centennial Commission, and Melior Publishing felt represented Washington state best. In the final version, Washington state's natural geography takes center stage and features long-standing tropes of Pacific Northwest rugged individualism and relationships to the vast landscape. A titled section titled "The Frozen Logger" focuses on the realities and romanticisms of the timber industry. *WSAL* notes that, thematically, logging songs dealt with "the dangers of the profession, the laughable ignorance of the greenhorn, the reputation for toughness that loggers have earned." The tune "Fire Danger," sung from the perspective of a lumberjack, criticizes supposed soft college boys who went to college to learn "to tie ribbons all around, and look up in their rule book for a way to close you down." In other words, the song was all about "the meddlesome intransigence of bureaucracy" that prevented real loggers from getting the work done.[343] By highlighting this rhetoric, the songbook uncritically commemorates a regional brand of ruggedness and disdain towards outsiders who bring

Edited Text Introductions and Table of Contents, submitted to Melior Publications by Linda Allen, March 18, 1988," box 3, folder "Melior publications correspondence Dec 1987-Jan 1989 3/2," Linda Allen Papers.

[342] Linda Allen to Putnam Barber, 4 April 1988, box 3, folder "Melior publications correspondence Dec 1987-Jan 1989 3/2," Linda Allen Papers. Despite the personal attacks, Allen expressed a desire "to make it clear that I wish the book well, and look forward to continued involvement in Centennial Commission activities."

[343] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 40.

impediments to freedom and unrestricted consumption – the same kind of sentiment present in Francis Henry's re-write of "The Old Settler" in the early 20th century.[344] The songbook doubles down on a Northwest brand of hardiness and authenticity in the 1982 tune "Northwest Gal," a "salty tribute to the woman of the Pacific Northwest" who is "strong and independent as any man." *WSAL* included a companion poem by Seattle folk singer Bob Nelson that celebrated the "male counterpart" to the "Northwest Gal." Nelson's poem invoked a veritable Old Settler, a "rugged individual, a special breed of man" who "doesn't shave, his clothes are old" and "lives down on the beach/where all of God's gifts to man/are there within his reach."[345] The narrative of Washington state's ripe and glorious natural bounty continued in the subsection "From the Mountains to the Sea," which celebrated the "outstanding physical features of the state's landscape" which "stir the imagination and bring forth strong artistic expressions."[346] *WSAL* did introduce current topics into the discourse, and filed songs about the "cost of progress" and environmental concerns under "Passing of the Old Ways." This subsection featured "Do Not Mortgage the Farm," a late 19th century song that mourned the "human tragedy and loss of irreplaceable skills" in the farming industry and Linda Waterfall's aforementioned "The Whale Song."[347] Linda Allen had intended to spend "equal time on the other side of the [Cascade] mountains" to include Eastern Washington history and experience, yet the majority of songs in *WSAL* represented a brand of Washington state identity tied to the Puget Sound.[348] In this way, *WSAL* presented a critical counterpoint to narratives of natural splendor and unchecked progress while simultaneously bolstering long-

[344] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore*, 46-47.
[345] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore,* 69.
[346] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore*, 38.
[347] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore*, 117.
[348] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.

standing myths of Northwest rugged individualism which was inherently exclusive to anyone and everyone who did not or could not fit the bill.

These concepts were not all that different from those represented and celebrated in *The Rainy Day Song Book,* but differed importantly because they occurred on a larger scale and with a new level of state support and involvement. With added support and visibility came greater impact in the region. It is certainly true what *Washington Songs and Lore* espouses: "in songs we find some of the truest expressions of how ordinary people viewed their experiences and of how they felt about their lives."[349] Regional songs carried messages as to what historical narratives, elements of regional identity, and ideas of statehood these stakeholders held dearest. It is equally valid to say that these same songs, as fragments that occurred within and a part of a history of division and discrimination, were deeply exclusionary. The structural forces at work dictated that *Washington Songs and Lore* could only represent a relatively narrow set of Northwest experiences, despite the fact that songbook committee members dedicated significant time, energy and expertise into the distinctly opposite goal.

Reactions to WSAL

Media and public reactions to *Washington Songs and Lore* were mostly positive, if mildly so. Many articles expressed amusement at the tune "Godzilla Ate Tukwila" and focused on the fact that the publishers were unable to obtain copyright for the use of Richard Berry's "Louie Louie," which for some was a "glaringly obvious" omission.[350] One columnist focused on the "community pride" encouraged by *Washington Songs and Lore* booster songs and lightly criticized the "rags"

[349] Allen, *Washington Songs and Lore*, 3.
[350] John K. Wiley, "State centennial songbook: has 'Godzilla Ate Tukwila' but lacks one monster hit," *Spokesman-Review,* September 24, 1988. "Official State Songbook Omits 'Louie Louie,'" *The Seattle Times,* September 28, 1988 F1.

masquerading as "hometown hymns" for their uninspiring and unenthusiastic civic pride.[351] One exception to the positive reviews was an overtly critical newspaper column that shows contention over the political subtext in *WSAL.* In the *Bremerton Sun,* columnist Adele Ferguson derisively questioned the qualifications of Allen, "who, with the blessings of the Washington Centennial planners, heads the committee that is compiling an official Washington state song book." Ferguson took issue with the exclusion of "Seattle," a Perry Como hit song featured as the theme song for the 1968 TV show "Here Come the Brides." Ferguson also stated that what "really set[s] [her] off" was a comment where Allen expressed her dismay "over not having any song about the internment of Japanese citizens in Washington, a part of history [Allen didn't] think we should ignore.'" Ferguson suggested that Allen include "a song about the mangled ships that came back to Washington for repair in World War II as a result of kamikaze attacks" and recommended the songbook showcase "honest-to-God...*songs* instead of social messages."[352] In a response to Ferguson's editorial, Allen wrote to the editor of the *Bremerton Sun* to point out inconsistencies in Ferguson's article and clarify her role and rationale in the song selection process. Allen called attention to the committee's tireless work to make the "difficult choices" of representation. She argued eloquently in response to Ferguson's distinction between songs and social messages, stating that "what is a truer representation of a culture than the songs which reflect not only our joys, but our sorrows."[353] Allen was not the only individual to protest to Ferguson's column. A group of twenty-nine South Bend/Willapa Harbor residents wrote to the *Bremerton Sun* to defend

[351] Mike Henderson, "Want a little community pride? You can get it for a song," *The Everett Herald.* Henderson points to "the nervous assertion that 'You'll Like Tacoma'" or, with an unseen shrug and understood apology, singers will mumble "'My Home's in Cathlamet.'"
[352] Adele Ferguson, "'Seattle' advocate sour it's not in song book," *Bremerton Sun,* September 1986. "Here Come the Brides" was included in the final copy of *WSAL.* Ferguson was reacting not to a final copy of the songbook, but to an AP story describing the project which included a few quotes from Allen.
[353] Linda Allen to *Bremerton Sun* editor, 24 September 1986, box 2, folder "songbook committee minutes 1986-1989 2/7," Linda Allen Papers.

"Washington, My Home" as the state song whose "descriptive words and tuneful melody expresses what we feel about our State."[354] The public opposition to and support of the "social messages" present in *WSAL,* and the exchanges around this conflict, underline the social and political subtext to the songbook and its role as a contested site of conflicting narratives. Individuals were quick to defend the songs of their homeland and the symbols of their civic belonging. The conflict also underscores how the best intentions of songbook committee members, and especially the work of Linda Allen, were not immune to forces outside of their control, from the publisher to the public commentator.

Through the process of developing *Washington Songs and Lore,* state government representatives, folklorists, publishers, and songwriters took up the mantle of folk culture mediator. Collectively, these individuals collaborated to assemble, contextualize, and present folk music culture, transmuting broader ideas about identity and belonging to a wider public. In this way, these collaborative relationships represented a new kind of folk music middleman. Although Washington state government funded and oversaw *Washington Songs and Lore* during a time of increased state power, it did not represent an explicitly statist vision. Songbook committee members, namely Linda Allen, guided the project in line with their personal values and concepts of state history. This process was a significant challenge for the songbook committee. Firstly, the large number of songs available represented overlapping and conflicting voices, a complexity of history and identities that required certain expertise to unravel. Allen acknowledged the difficulty of representation in Washington state folk and popular music, where "every person you asked would have a different vision of what really is Washington music because it depends on what you absorb...what does represent Northwest music?...the answer is probably as diverse as the person

[354] Letter to Adele Ferguson, 24 September 1986, box 4, folder "Correspondence 1986 July-Dec 4/2," Linda Allen Papers.

you're talking to."[355] Layered on top of this challenge was an expectation, as a product of a piece of legislature reliant on government funding, that the final version would succeed in celebrating Washington's history and shared heritage while generating pride in the general public. The point was to be a celebration of the Washington state Centennial, after all. Drawing an exact collection of songs from the past required an ability to traverse problematic histories and acknowledge a cultural status quo that was no longer acceptable. *WSAL* creators conjured visions that evoked romantic notions of the past – they certainly had to – but did so with diligent attention to social concerns, measured intention, and a critical eye. They achieved this independently from the oversight of their financial backers, up until the point that the publishers and the public weighed in and complicated their image of the state. The success of the project to include a truly representative selection of Northwest experience wavered, as structures of discrimination, conflicting political opinions, and disputed views of state history threatened the progressive values the songbook committee sought to uphold. *WSAL* inscribed state and regional identity through folk music, and in the process, ratified a specific brand of Washington state folk culture mostly tied to a white experience of Puget Sound. The symbolic value of Northwest folk music was so potent that the Centennial Commission printed Guthrie's "Roll On, Columbia" on the back of Centennial event invitations and integrated *WSAL* into live Centennial programming.[356] Through its backing and support, the state embraced a certain narrative of history via folk music, one which didn't apply to all Washington residents, thereby ushering a specific brand of folk culture into official culture. In fact, the Washington Centennial was not the first time the state and folk music insiders

[355] Interview with Linda Allen, February 24, 2021.
[356] Washington Centennial, "Join the Celebration of the Century" brochure; "Centennial '89 Official Kick-Off Events" featured a program titled "Linda Allen Performing Washington Songs and Lore," box 3, folder "Centennial promotion 1985-1989," Linda Allen Papers.

collaborated to bring Northwest folk culture into the public forum. In the early 1970s, the idea for the first Northwest Folklife Festival began to germinate.

The Northwest Folklife Festival

On Memorial Day weekend 1972, crowds of people meandered through Seattle Center, listening to the sounds of soft guitar music and choruses of harmonious voices lilting across the lawn. American folk music was not the only entertainment audible along the pavilion. The sounds and sights of the Scandinavian Folk Dancers, Nez Perce ancestral hoop dancers, glass blowing demonstrations, painting displays and puppetry, Middle Eastern belly dancers, and old-time fiddling competitions filtered through the grounds, an invitation to participate in the region's folk traditions. This was the first Northwest Folklife Festival (NFF), a yearly festival characterized by a commitment to exhibiting diverse cultural communities of the state and region. The Northwest Folklife Festival was a collaboration between folk music insiders and state and national government on a scale larger than other regional folk song projects like *Washington Songs and Lore*. The ethos and impetus for the festival, the development of the NFF's programming, and the evolution of the festival over the period of a decade demonstrate another mechanism by which folk culture developed into official culture in Washington state during the 1970s and 80s. Like *The Rainy Day Song Book* and *Washington Songs and Lore,* the Northwest Folklife Festival relied on folk music insiders for much of its development, and for that reason it was similarly based on ideals of diverse representation. Compared to regional songbooks, or the work of the SFS and WCHMS, the individuals behind the NFF were less constrained by their own ideological constructs of authenticity and had greater supportive institutional backing, stretching the boundaries of inclusion to feature a wider array of Northwest folk culture. In this way, the NFF

acted as another kind of folk culture middleman by mediating folk traditions and ushering them into a sanctioned, public cultural space.

Origins

The design and development of Northwest Folklife Festival involved individuals, associations, and government agencies across the continental United States – stakeholders with both overlapping and conflicting motivations. The initial idea for a folk music festival in Seattle did not originate from inside the city itself but "came from the National Park Service and National Folk Festival Association (NFFA), who sought to establish a national network of regional folk festivals" that featured "traditional music, dance, and folk arts around the country."[357] As it happened, at a Washington DC party in 1970 two representatives of the NFFA were introduced to Mike Holmes, a former member of the Seattle Folklore Society. After learning of their work to launch regional folk festivals, Holmes recommended Seattle folkie Phil Williams as a contact and partner in developing a Seattle folk festival. Following this, "the NFFA's Andy Wallace flew to Seattle, where he met with Phil, and together [they] pitched the idea to Charles Gebler of the local National Park Service office."[358] At that time, the National Park Service was motivated to initiate regional folk festivals to expand exposure to the folk arts all over the country.[359] In the words of Phil Williams, in the early 1970s the NPS endeavored to magnify their own "presence in urban areas of the country [and] the concept of running a 'folk festival,' whatever that was, in cities, came up as a possible way of getting this presence."[360] This was concurrent with a period in which

[357] James W. Edgar, "All Roads Lead to Darrington: Building a Bluegrass Community in Western Washington," (MA thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2021), 166.
https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5516&context=etd
[358] Edgar, "All Roads Lead to Darrington," 166.
[359] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[360] Phil Williams, "Folklife Observations, April 6, 2011," 1.

another national government entity, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), had a vested interest in funding folklorists in each state. The NEA's financial investment in regional folklorists was, according to Richard Scholtz, tied to "political reasons...because it was a way for the federal government to fund ethnic communities, which was good for politics."[361] For national stakeholders, the optics of supporting diverse communities was just as valuable as the support itself, if not more so. It follows that the responsibility to generate the actual funding for the NFF fell to local actors. The two non-local representatives, Wallace from the NFFA and Gebler from the NPS, crafted and presented the first proposal for a folk music festival at Seattle Center to the Seattle Folklore Society in 1971. From that point on, it was largely local actors that facilitated the development of the Northwest Folklife Festival. Since the NPS and the NFFA lacked substantial funds for festival planning, fundraising was a local undertaking buoyed by local enthusiasm. A collection of Seattle-based groups, including the SFS, the Scandia Folk Dance Society, the Washington Old-Time Fiddlers, KRAB-FM, and REACH (Recreation, Entertainment and Creative Help, a nonprofit group that provided entertainment to retirement homes), began fundraising and organizing.[362] The City of Seattle donated $6,000 for the first year. With the help of volunteers and organizational support in the form of donated space and additional volunteers from Seattle Center, Phil Williams led the effort and supplied the vocal leadership that would define the NFF's ethos: to bring anything "people did themselves" to a wider audience than ever before.[363]

While the beginning of the Northwest Folklife Festival was tied to the early 1970s, it is more accurate to say its origins date to earlier in the 20th century when the concept of folklife rose

[361] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[362] Jim Kershner, "Northwest Folklife Festival (Seattle)," Historylink.org, accessed Nov. 11, 2022, https://www.historylink.org/file/20470.
[363] Jennifer White, "What People Do: The Beginnings of the Northwest Folklife Festival," Seattle Folklore Society, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.seafolklore.org/what-people-do-the-beginnings-of-the-northwest-folklife-festival/.

in the public imagination and folk music festivals sprang up across the country. Even before the American folk music revival of the 1950s and 60s, the nation experienced a renewed interest in folk traditions. As established by historian and folklorist Simon J. Bronner, folklife grew "as a term for the social basis of tradition" and became "a marker of community or group identity...folklife [was] a way that people say, 'this is who and how we are.'"[364] In 1934, folklorist Sarah Gertrude Knott founded the first National Folk Festival, an event which featured craft presentations and folklife demonstrations that exposed a wide audience to traditional cultural practices. Part of the legacy of the National Folk Festival was its work to assemble the arts of disparate nations, languages, and groups "into the same event on an equal footing."[365] The National Folk Festival also inaugurated a folk festival format that inspired both the 1960s era Newport Folk Festival and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. These festivals continued the precedent set by the National Folk Festival by collecting and celebrating folklife and folk music at a time when the American folk music revival had taken on mainstream significance. Many attendees were young folk music revivalists who were drawn to folklife traditions as an antidote to the perceived fragmentation of their own culture and community. Historian Clare Donaldson has established how folk music revivalists "sought to solve this collective identity crisis by...[introducing] folk music into debates about the nation's civic and cultural identity."[366] In the Northwest, the beginning of the folk music revival coincided with another kind of public festival: the 1962 Century 21 Exposition, or the Seattle World's Fair. This event was focused on the impact of progress and emergent technology, but nonetheless featured folk music performers. The festival

[364] Simon J. Bronner, *Following Tradition: Folklore in the Discourse of American Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 266-67.
[365] "A Brief History of the National Folk Festival," National Council for the Traditional Arts, accessed December 19, 2022, https://ncta-usa.org/the-national-folk-festival/a-brief-history-of-the-national-folk-festival/.
[366] Donaldson, *I Hear America Singing,* 3.

published "Sounds of Music from the U.N. Pavilion, Folk Songs of the World," a collection which featured souvenir sheet music and recordings of local folk singers who gathered spontaneously to sing in front of the United Nations Pavilion throughout the festival.[367] In *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940,* John M. Findlay describes how the Century 21 Exposition, as a site of urban gathering and celebration, "confirmed and strengthened people's identity as Westerners by helping them come to terms with unwieldy cities...[the Fair] imparted a sense of community and stability to an urban region characterized by explosive growth and rapid change."[368] In Seattle, Century 21 introduced the role of urban festival as solidifier of community bonds, an idea that echoed into the development of the NFF.

Following the folk music revival period, "folklife" as a term indicated a social vision of cultural diversity during the 1970s which anticipated the rise of multiculturalism in the 1980s.[369] The reanimation of folklife and folk festivals nationally during the 20th century created the context for the Northwest Folklife Festival. In Seattle, regional culture animated the event via a distinctly Pacific Northwest approach and spirit. Phil Williams, at the center of festival development, believed that the success of the NFF could not have been achieved elsewhere. He described how:

> the Folklife Festival could have started and operated like any 'folk festival,' and probably would have so been run, if it were not that it was started in Seattle, in the Far West, where attitudes are different from most of the rest of the country...no other part of the country...had the combination of folks with a broad knowledge about the traditional and cultural arts of their region, the willingness to share authority, the respect for nonprofessional artists who desire to share what they do with the public, and a local

[367] "Folk Songs of the World," souvenir record album from the U.N Pavilion at the Seattle World's Fair, 1962," Museum of History & Industry, accessed February 2, 2023, https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/5423/rec/2. See also Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 239-243 for a discussion of music at Century 21. Armbruster states that the Fair "looked ahead technologically, less so musically," 240. He also argues that the fair, in part by establishing the Seattle Opera House, "set off an arts explosion that continues to reverberate a half century later," 249. The Opera House would be an important performance venue for acts at the Northwest Folklife Festival.
[368] John M. Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 5.
[369] Bronner, *Following Tradition,* 304.

> government that would support this. This has been borne out over the years as there are very few participatory traditional arts festivals in the world, and none as successful as Northwest Folklife.[370]

Festival ethos and planning

This confluence of attitudes, individuals, and systems of support went a long way to ensure the success of an event where a philosophy of inclusion and diversity was central. Local and national stakeholders agreed that the mission of the Northwest Folklife Festival was to feature "traditional folk arts as practiced from day to day" performed by "the various ethnic groups found in the region, both domestic and foreign." Organizers believed that this approach gave "people from the area an opportunity to see the rich heritage of traditional arts present in the area which generally are not given exposure [in] the mass media."[371] While national organizations and local actors shared these ideas, the development of the first festival was a distinctly local effort.

Seattle organizers directed the planning of the Northwest Folklife Festival independent from the control of nationally based and local organizations that had a vested interest. Early on, the Seattle Folklore Society obtained the production contract when the festival first became a non-profit corporation, which enabled "the festival to stick to its original principles while still making use of the money given by the city."[372] This did not come about by chance but was the result of Phil Williams' professional background as an attorney with experience in non-profit incorporation. Williams knew that the City of Seattle had to give their donated funds to a tax-exempt organization. Having already incorporated the Seattle Folklore Society as a tax-exempt nonprofit, Williams suggested the SFS hold the production agreement, thereby granting them power as administrators

[370] Williams, "Observations," 1.
[371] Stewart Hendrickson, "The First NW Folklife Festival - 1972 - A Modest Beginning," Pacific Northwest Folklore Society, accessed October 19, 2022, http://pnwfolklore.org/wp-nwhoot/index.php/2017/05/16/the-first-nw-folklife-festival-1972-a-modest-beginning-by-stewart-hendrickson/.
[372] White, "What People Do."

of the funds. This was a clever means of keeping the SFS close as contributors and producers of the event and ensuring that the Festival Board of Directors held tighter control of the programming. When Seattle Center approached Williams to hire a star to headline the festival – presumably to increase consumer foot traffic in Seattle Center – Williams could take it up with the SFS. As producers, they could and did deny these types of requests.[373] In this way, Williams used his legal expertise to thwart attempts to feature major performers in favor of local and amateur acts that were closer in line with the SFS's mission to keep the festival hyperlocal. The ability of local actors to control the programming of the festival, and the fact that no one was getting paid, facilitated a grassroots approach in contrast with other regional folklife festivals of the period. In Seattle, "everybody that comes and plays is their own star because we're trying to present the things that people do here in the Northwest to entertain themselves, the things they make."[374] The approach to planning the NFF was democratic and collaborative, and involved "very little 'top down'" administration."[375] There were stage leaders who knew which people to approach and ask to get involved, individuals knowledgeable about crafts who organized the artisan booths, and representatives from distinctive cultural communities who brought in their own performers and ran their own stages. Volunteers from the Seattle Folklore Society and REACH coordinated much of the programming, which was then decided upon by the Festival Board of Directors. In this way, it was the energy and organization of volunteers, attendees, and folklife enthusiasts that cultivated the character and ensured that the NFF included as many facets of Northwest folk culture as possible.

[373] Williams, "Observations," 5.
[374] "Folklife Festival 1977 - KCTS Documentary," Northwest Folklife, accessed November 12, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOUlvvmwckw. The quote is from Phil Williams, featured in the documentary.
[375] Williams, "Observations," 4.

As they did within their respective communities, regional folk musicians placed high value on the concept of participation in planning the NFF. Seattle folk musicians took participation seriously as a practice, which they believed diverged from the attitudes of some federal organizations. For his part, Williams wanted the festival to be participatory in the sense that "people would start playing music for themselves." This idea deviated from that of the NEA, "who considered audience participation to be sitting in a seat and trying not to fall asleep."[376] Williams and SFS members believed participation evolved beyond consumption and was defined by active engagement, whether that was "playing music or dancing or making some kind of food or helping put on the event."[377] For Phil and Vivian Williams, the "whole idea" of participation was based on the support of "real people" over nationally or regionally recognized folk acts. They wanted to support individuals and groups whose folk traditions could be shared with the general public and thereby "encourage participation...that was the key word in every way possible."[378] In a 1977 KCTS feature, one festival attendee praised the NFF for "the difference between it and all the other folk festivals" she'd attended, because "the participants are the performers, and the performers are the participants."[379] The KCTS feature reflected the foundational concept of participation, and stated that the "country's growing interest in the folk arts seems to reflect the public's desire to participate more directly in the arts," where many people were "no longer content to be simply art consumers" and were "looking for ways to incorporate music, dance, or craft activities into their own lives."[380] Participation went hand in hand with the embeddedness of folk traditions in

[376] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[377] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[378] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[379] "Folklife Festival 1977," Northwest Folklife.
[380] "Folklife Festival 1977," Northwest Folklife.

everyday life and the centrality of connection and inclusion, far removed from any hint of capitalist gain.

By providing a platform for diverse communities to perform folk traditions within the city, the NFF exposed the public to traditions that would otherwise be experienced only within closed boundaries. In this way, the NFF practiced an ideology of diversity and multiculturalism drawn from the Northwest folk music scene. Vivian Williams best summarized this brand of inclusion by describing how an individual didn't "have to be of XYZ heritage" or "come from ten generations of XYZ...to participate in XYZ expression."[381] This ideology blurred the borders of cultural exchange and refuted the idea that practicing folk song, or folk culture, enclosed traditions to closed communities. Organizers and participants believed that folk festivals created openings for the sharing of knowledge between communities. It is no surprise that the Williams' experience with and exposure to the Darrington folk music community "formed the core belief behind the starting of the Northwest Folklife Festival," as the experience showed "that everyone had something good to offer, no matter their education or station in life." This concept informed the development of the NFF as "an opportunity to give ordinary folks, engaged in traditional arts that would not be mentioned in the media," like the bluegrass musicians in Darrington, "a stage in a high profile setting where they could show the public their arts, which otherwise would be virtually undiscoverable by the public."[382] For attendees, there wasn't "much of an opportunity hear any of this kind of music, any of the ethnic groups from the foreign ethnic communities," and for the performers, it was a chance to perform for new audiences outside of the borders of their remote towns.[383] Organizers structured the NFF to link individuals and communities within the region,

[381] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[382] Williams, "Observations," 2-3.
[383] "Folklife Festival 1977," Northwest Folklife.

forming new pathways of collaboration and connection. This was achieved through a distinctly local approach that participants understood to be deeper than what the NFFA or NPS alone could have facilitated.

The ability of the first NFF to center diverse regional folk traditions occurred within a broader context of national multiculturalism. In *I Hear America Singing,* Donaldson outlines the work of activists during the 1970s who "began a concerted effort to ensure that the American identity reflected the nation's culturally diverse population." These "multiculturalists returned to celebrating ethnic and racial diversity as the defining feature of American identity" and were "highly influenced by the Black Nationalist movement of the late 1960s, as well as by theories of cultural democracy." [384] During this time, activists "joined with public folklorists and multiculturalists to publicize the notion, in [American folklorist] Archie Green's words, 'that traditional artistry and folk wisdom were integral to the American experience.'" Concepts like cultural preservation and celebration of minority and underrepresented groups gained traction in the public sphere and influenced government funding, education, school curriculum and media representation. The Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, which set an early example of folklife festival programming, provided another point of contact between multiculturalism and folk music.[385] Folklife festivals across the country advocated cultural variety through a myriad of folk traditions and offered Americans a chance to "reaffirm our pluralism and cherish our differences while singing each other's songs" during a "time when the future was filled with uncertainty."[386]

[384] Donaldson, *I Hear America Singing,* 171.
[385] Donaldson, *I Hear America Singing,* 174.
[386] Donaldson, *I Hear America Singing,* 179. Donaldson traces pluralism within the American folk music revival to Carl Sandburg, who recognized "pluralism as a critical feature of American identity," an element which "would continue among every succeeding generation of folk revivalists," 18.

Like the growth of folklife in the public imagination, the rise of multiculturalism nationally informed the NFF's approach and granted greater cultural legitimacy.

The logic of multiculturalism, that engaging in diverse forms of "folk wisdom" was a practice that fortified bonds of community, appealed to local festival organizers. To that end, they readily applied these principles to festival programming. According to Phil Williams, the Northwest had a "real mix of cultural heritages, reflecting the many ethnic groups of the area as well as traditional American folklore," and he did his part to ensure that the NFF was very diverse culturally.[387] The first festival did feature varied performers from the Western US, from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska, including the Tall Timber String band, the Edmonds Senior Citizen Band, bluegrass and old-time string bands, Swiss bands, Scottish Highland dancers, traditional and contemporary folksingers, the Cape Fox dancers, a balalaika trio, a Seattle-based Zimbabwean marimba band, and the Oinkari Basque Dancers from Boise.[388] For SFS organizer John Ullman, the presence of diverse groups in the festival refuted the idea that Seattle was an exclusively white city. Because the NFF provided communities that otherwise lacked significant public representation access to venues like the Seattle Opera House, major theaters, and volunteer festival staff, they facilitated an increase in exposure and connection between disparate groups. Beyond affording access to resources, the NFF allowed groups to exercise agency in managing their own performances and programs.[389] This approach placed greater control in the hands of community representatives themselves, providing opportunity to dictate the mediation or presentation of their own culture. The influence of multiculturalism was also evident in the National Park Service festival contributions. The NPS and the NFFA had little hand in devising

[387] "Folklife Festival 1977," Northwest Folklife; Irene Namkung, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.
[388] Hendrickson, "The First NW Folklife Festival," Pacific Northwest Folklore Society.
[389] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021.

the actual programming, though the NPS did insist on featuring regional Indigenous dancers and the Basque dance group from Idaho to diversify the regional lineup.[390] Diversity and multiculturalism continued to define the festival well into the 1980s. The 1988 festival featured no less than 750 wide-ranging folk acts and performers, including a Ukrainian-Australian bandurist, yodeling, Southern gospel and the Windjammer Harmonica Band.[391] From the first festival in 1972 to the contemporary iteration, organizers and attendees celebrated plural identities to nurture a regional sense of belonging. Phil Williams stated that despite the fact that the Pacific Northwest was "an area with a chronic identity problem," each year at the NFF it could present the "rich and varied ethnic and traditional life" of its residents and generated "pride in the accomplishments of traditional artists in the area."[392] In this way, the NFF expanded the audience of folk traditions and created new bonds between arbiters of folk culture and the public more widely.[393]

In developing the first Northwest Folklife Festival, local individuals and federal government agencies conceptualized the event to represent the collective yet varied identities of residents of Seattle and the greater region. Seattle volunteers worked tirelessly and independently to bring into fruition an accurate image of the region. National values and support of multiculturalism and folk life influenced their attitudes, and subsequently, the popularity of the event. Beyond the ethos of the NFF and the ideologies of representation, an investigation into the experiences of the festival, as lived by attendees, further illustrates the function of the NFF to produce and establish Northwest folk culture in the imagination and experience of the region.

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[390] Interview with Vivian Williams, October 14, 2021.
[391] Karen Mathieson, "Festival Brings 750 Folk Acts," *The Seattle Times,* May 26, 1988, F9.
[392] Williams, "Observations," 15.
[393] In *If Beale Street Could Talk,* Robert Cantwell argues that the “the folklife festival is a practical investigation of the genesis of social experience in a world where the boundaries between cultures are no longer geographical or political but personal, in which the person is in himself or herself culturally not one but many, capable of moving within and among many communities, in which 'culture' itself has emerged as the force that secures the connection between reality and the individual soul,” 109-110.

Folklife Experience

At the Northwest Folklife Festival, organizers and attendees found a mecca that put into practice their shared values of connection, participation, and social intimacy. Because local folkies were largely responsible for conceptualizing the event, these values stood at the center of attendees' experience. The festival extended the visibility and influence of folk music communities in the Northwest and fortified bonds between folk music groups. As the festival grew into the 1970s and 80s, a consensus developed among early attendees that the function of the event had evolved past its original ethos.

At the heart of the NFF was the idea that it facilitated authentic interaction between as assortment of the public: "musicians, artisans, music lovers, merchants and just plain people-watchers."[394] Local folkies who were active volunteers and whose values were deeply integrated into the event had a higher stake in the festival. Folk musicians from around the region thought of the festival as an almost sacred pilgrimage that strengthened connections and solidarity. Festival jam sessions and casual performances were a critical element of the experience. Occurring at the fringes of scheduled performances, groups "would cluster into corners to play a few tunes. At one side was a string band. Above them, a bagpipe group. A man sat alone at a table, playing a small accordion."[395] Musicians and attendees reveled in the participatory and spontaneous. The social bonding aspect of the NFF extended beyond the bounds of Seattle Center and into the after-hours in the homes of attendees. Folk musicians from across the region "would all go to Folklife and crash with friends and stay up all night singing at their house."[396] Especially in the early years, these informal sites and intimate spaces attracted musicians and provided opportunities for group

[394] Patrick Macdonald, "At this festival, you don't just watch or listen; you experience folklore," *Seattle Daily Times,* May 25, 1984, 17.
[395] Debby Lowman, "Folk festival may've been wet – but not dampened," *Seattle Daily Times,* May 30, 1976.
[396] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.

singing, song sharing, and relaxed performances. The NFF also afforded rich grounds for meeting people and networking outside the confines of a smaller city or town. For example, in Bellingham, there were "a lot of people playing music" but "not lots of places to perform" before Richard Scholtz established the WCHMS. Therefore, it would be difficult to "know how you would meet anybody."[397] The NFF was a social and professional network and a means to stay current, as one could keep "track of who's who and what people are sounding like."[398] The inspiration drawn from the participation based, informal music sessions at the NFF had regional ramifications. Specifically, the experience directly inspired Scholtz to start the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society to maintain the kind of folk music bonding obtainable at the NFF. Scholtz stated that his experience at the first festival "was really an eye-opener" and put him "further into the idea that really [the spirit of folk music practice] was a participation thing much more than an audience thing."[399] The NFF provided ample time and space to initiate new and fortify existing relationships between folk musicians, a defining characteristic of the festival that became vulnerable as time marched on.

Growing Pains

The halcyon days of the NFF persisted into the late 1970s but began to be threatened by growth as the decade progressed. The expansion in the size and scope of the festival, and the reactions of faithful attendees who remembered and mourned the loss of "the good old days," reveals the shift of folk culture to official culture where the traditions shared by intimate communities became valued as part of a larger regional experience.[400] In *If Beale Street Could*

[397] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[398] Laurel Bliss oral history, 16 February 2006, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society oral histories, 2005-2007, XOE_CPNWS0301wchms, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, 15.
[399] Richard Scholtz oral history, 20 October 2005, WCHMS Oral History, Whatcom County Homemade Music Society oral histories, 2005-2007, XOE_CPNWS0301wchms, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, 6.
[400] John Ullman, Interview with Irene Namkung and John Ullman, September 24, 2021, "the good old days."

Talk, historian Robert Cantwell establishes how folk festivals bestow honor and attention on folk culture and reframe "folk culture as an element of a legitimate, polite, or elite culture, typically under the auspices of institutions representing these interests...and with the sponsorship of various establishments, foundations, corporations, governments, agencies, and the like."[401] In the context of the Northwest Folklife Festival, local institutions like the City of Seattle and Seattle Center served to benefit from an association with folk culture, much in the same way politicians like Representative Sutherland benefited from using folk music to meet his political aims or in the fashion of Ivar Haglund, who profited through the use of "The Old Settler." As the NFF grew, local businesses, sponsors, and national performing acts recognized the benefit of association with the NFF. The increasing involvement of entities with commercial interest legitimized the cultural forms on display but distanced the event from its original function in exchange for corporate and institutional support.

The growth of the NFF over the span of two decades was undeniable. The first NFF featured around 150 folk groups, the majority of which were based in the Northwest. By the second festival in 1973, "almost twice as many groups performed...and crafts and food booths were added." Ten years later, the festival featured some 600 local, national, and international performers, and the operating budget had increased to $160,000. In contrast to the $6,000 raised locally for the first festival, funds in the mid 1980s were "raised by donations, corporate support, the fees charged vendors and proceeds from souvenir sales." The city continued to donate facilities and labor, though most of the labor was still done by local unpaid volunteers of which there were 400 in 1984.[402] For regional folk musicians, the festival's expansion meant the distressing reduction of a vital element. Flip Breskin stated that "it got so big that there wasn't much room for community

[401] Cantwell, *If Beale Street Could Talk,* 71.
[402] Both quotes in this paragraph are from Macdonald, "At this festival, you don't just watch or listen," 17.

singing...[there] was still some but it was just too loud."[403] The growing array of acts contributed to an "unwieldy" size where groups splintered off into smaller sub-communities that didn't "necessarily have much to do with each other" anymore.[404] In other words, the small size of the festival in the early years allowed for a continuation of traditions treasured by local folk music communities, the preservation of which was impossible at a festival alongside 20,000 other people. This also meant a shift from a celebration of how folk traditions were embedded in regional life to newer iterations that highlighted what Richard Scholtz termed "virtuoso performance music."[405] Before 1980, song circles and small groups of people who knew each other dominated the space. By the early 1980s, the festival was much more focused on attempting to lure a larger audience with headliners, more stages, and vendors. Places for informal sessions were edged out. For Northwest folkies, "it wasn't bad, it just changed."[406]

Although the NFF's defining character had changed for many local folk musicians, festival administration and the media publicly doubled down on a narrative of community increasingly global in nature. In 1989, the NFF described themselves to *The Seattle Times* as "community based," but nonetheless featured headlining performers and "out-of-town blues acts Son Thomas, Precious Bryant and Moses Rascoe."[407] Local media reported the expansion of the NFF and the addition of non-local acts with a positive spin. For example, *The Seattle Times* stated that for most people, the mention of the Northwest Folklife Festival had typically elicited "stereotypes of bluegrass fiddling and gentle folkies on the lawn." The article praised the festival for recently shaking "the stodgy Folklife pumpkin" and "dramatically stretch[ing] its boundaries to include

[403] Interview with Flip Breskin, February 17, 2021.
[404] Interview with Rika Ruebsaat and John Bartlett, September 6, 2021.
[405] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021.
[406] Interview with Richard Scholtz, August 31, 2021
[407] Paul de Barros, "Folklife's Program Director Reaches for the High Notes," *The Seattle Times,* May 25, 1989, G7.

world music, non-neighborhood acts, and many performers whom dyed-in-the-wool folkies would not consider folk artists at all." The NFF began to include national and global acts – a Puerto Rican ensemble from New York, a Traditional Blues Project, and a Noh theater group from Japan – in an appeal to multiculturalism barring the potential for local groups to perform. While the media pondered if growing attendance and novel new acts would "spoil Folklife," festival director Scott Nagel believed that "at its essence, the festival [was] the same" as it always was because it retained "it's participatory nature."[408] Folkies may have disagreed, but in the public eye and for festival administrators, the NFF was an ongoing success. It was under Nagel's leadership that the festival obtained its own tax-exempt status and was thereby able to produce the festival itself, lending more programming control to Seattle Center. According to Phil Williams, where at the start Seattle Center had wanted to bring in national acts, by the 1980s they had "completely changed their tune and were now fully in accord with, and strong advocates of Folklife presenting amateur performers from the Pacific Northwest."[409] In this sense, Seattle Center helped balance the influx of new performers from outside the region with a commitment to representing Northwest acts. Regardless, Williams acknowledged that "the whole scene is a fragile one" where growing demands required more financial support, space, and programming. Williams still believed that despite the augmented size of Folklife, the festival remained in "fulfillment of its philosophy" to bring folk traditions to the public.[410] Clearly, whether the original philosophy of the NFF was still intact in the late 1980s depended on who you asked. Festival administrators, the media, and regional folk musicians all agreed that Folklife had expanded in reaction to the growing interest in folk culture

[408] Paul de Barros, "Folklife's Program Director Reaches for the High Notes," *The Seattle Times.*
[409] Williams, "Observations," 5.
[410] Karen Mathieson, "Folklife Just Keeps Growing," *The Seattle Times,* May 21, 1989, L1.

in the region, to the degree that it excluded many of those who constituted the original base audience.

Besides the growth facilitated by more funding, higher numbers of attendees, and the increase of non-regional acts, local and national broadcasting of festival performances contributed to another significant shift. At the start of the 1983 festival, Seattle station KOMO-TV broadcast the opening show on their program "PM Northwest," an event officiated by Mayor Charles Royer that featured clogging, and string-band music.[411] In 1984, local radio station KUOW-FM broadcast 24 hours of the festival, and KBCS-FM aired additional portions over the course of the weekend. On a national scale, the National Public Radio satellite network played seven hours of live festival performances in 1983, "with 50 to 60 stations expected to broadcast all or part" of the Northwest Folklife Festival.[412] The media not only exposed regional cultural practices to a national audience, but it also legitimized traditional forms typically experienced in person and within distinct communities. In this way, the media framed folk culture as both appropriate for the national stage and representative of the region, facilitating the transfer of hyper-localized folk culture to sanctioned official culture. As further evidence of the institutional acceptance of folk culture, the 1989 Washington Centennial Commission recruited the NFF to produce Ethnic Heritage Celebrations as part of the statehood fête. The celebrations included a series featuring "the state's black, Filipino, Latino, Jewish and Nordic cultures" at "community centers, schools, libraries, fairs, festivals and other...institutions."[413] These exhibits and performing arts events reflected both the

[411] Carole Beers, "Getting folksy," *Seattle Daily Times,* May 23, 1983, B2.
[412] Macdonald, "At this festival, you don't just watch or listen," 17. In 1983, local station KRAB-FM broadcasted "major segments" of the festival live. Victor Stredicke, "Twisting the dial," *Seattle Daily Times,* May 15, 1983.
[413] Melinda Bargreen, "Centennial Leads Back to Homelands," *The Seattle Times,* November 17, 1988, F10. At the 1989 festival, "all of the state Centennial's traveling ethnic heritage exhibits" were on display. Don Tewkesbury, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* May 27, 1989, C1. These exhibits included "Filipinos of Washington State: 1889-1989"; "Fruits of our Labor: Contributions and Achievements by Hispanos"; "Nordic Heritage Northwest"; "Neglected Heirlooms: Blacks and Washington's Building Treasury"; the State Department of Social and Health Services' "A Legacy of Service to the People of Washington State: A Shared Experience"; and "A Coat of Many Colors:

national push towards multiculturalism and the designation of folk culture as legitimate by state entities. As the NFF programming and reach grew each year, audiences over 100,000 made it the "largest free folk festival in the country," a testament to its popularity and increasingly wide appeal.[414]

Conclusion

The popularity of the NFF had much to do with its inclusion of a greater assortment of cultural traditions compared to other folk song projects and communities of the 1970s and 80s, although they were guided by the same tenets of inclusion and diversity. For example, where the Seattle Folklore Society failed to create long-term connections to Seattle's Black community, the NFF occurred consistently over the years and generated lasting avenues for connection across cultural divides. In comparison to *Washington Songs and Lore,* the NFF achieved greater impact in representing a wider collection of Northwest traditional culture. The variations in the ability to realize their goals related to a few factors. Because of early intervention by Phil Williams to obtain the production contract for the festival, local folk musicians held greater power and were not subject to the same kind of monitoring or influence of publishers, state representatives, and government commissions that the *WSAL* committee experienced. NFF organizers also worked with an array of Seattle groups (including the SFS, the Scandia Folk Dance Society, the Washington Old-Time Fiddlers, KRAB-FM, and REACH) and placed greater autonomy in the hands of unique cultural communities to guide their own programming and performance. In this way, they

Washington's Jewish Community." From "Several Centennial events are planned throughout the state," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* May 25, 1989, C9. The 1989 opening ceremony featured the unveiling of the state Centennial sculpture, a glass art piece made of individual cubes that had been "etched and sandblasted by state artists with images that form a collage of Washington state scenes." Gene Stout, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* May 26, 1989, 8.

[414] Macdonald, "At this festival, you don't just watch or listen," 17.

implemented the type of cultural collaboration Linda Allen attempted when she reached out to Vi Hilbert and the Yakima Nation but could not fulfill due to lack of institutional support. If the *WSAL* committee had formally included tribal representatives and individuals from other Northwest minority groups, or if Melior Publishing had not edited Linda Allen's manuscript so heavily, its failure to fully represent the region could have been mitigated. Beyond local factors, the values of NFF organizers dovetailed with those of the National Folk Festival Association and the National Park Service. Furthermore, the NFF had ideological and historical ties to the American folk festival tradition. This institutional backing provided legitimacy on a larger scale.

Connected by shared ideology, folk music projects in the Northwest shaped a new type of folk music middleman. Folk music insiders and government entities collected, contextualized, interpreted, and packaged folk culture for the masses. These projects, while cooperative, were also contested sites where stakeholders struggled over narrative control. By facilitating the shift of folk culture to official culture, folk music programs positioned Northwest folk traditions as both legitimate and representative of collective history and heritage. Compared to the ideologies of the SFS or the WCHMS, which were guided by constructs of authenticity, the NFF's vision of inclusion was less constrained. Instead of privileging a specific version of American folk music or tradition, Phil Williams made sure the NFF featured anything "people did themselves." With institutional support, this approach secured a new level of diverse cultural representation in the Northwest which served to bring folk culture from distinct communities into a public space over the course of decades. Collaborative folk song projects in the Northwest during the 1970s and 80s revealed both the generative and restrictive power of folk music, where folk song practice reinforced specific markers of belonging while connecting segregated communities.

Conclusion

In the final pages of *Before Seattle Rocked,* Kurt Armbruster speculates that perhaps "The Old Settler" song may "remain the one piece of music closest to the city's soul" as residents "hold tight to the music of our fathers and find in it, as Seattleites always have, connection with the past and a bridge to the future."[415] For folk musicians in the Northwest active at the tail end of the folk music revival period, these connections were as tightly held as they were tenuous. The ways in which individuals and institutions interpreted folk music, and deployed it to suit varied means, shifted across the 20th century. The use of folk song activated and reinforced layers of symbolic meaning based in associations of place, desire for belonging, and reactions to change.

Folk songs and folk music communities in the Pacific Northwest were both ideologically tied to the national folk music revival and entirely emplaced in the region. Utilized by folk musicians, local organizations, and government agencies, folk songs served many functions: to reinforce and transcend place-stories, to glorify a settler past, to make claims to the land, to sell clams, to return to a time and place unpolluted by the effects of modernity, to market hydroelectric power, to elicit emotions of fealty and pride in a homeland, to exclude outsiders and newcomers, to promise human connection, and to make the world a better place. With shaky success, folk musicians stretched the filaments of folk songs beyond the living room of the Roeder Home, the auditorium at the Friends Center, or the folk song circle to reach communities separate from their own and the public more widely. Through an historical connection between folk music and political activism forged on the national stage, folk musicians recognized the ability of folk music to incite social change. To this end, they utilized folk music practice to diminish barriers between communities, yet the ability of folk song to create enduring connection and structural

[415] Armbruster, *Before Seattle Rocked,* 335.

transformation wavered in the face of formidable systems of racism and marginalization. However, folk music communities in the Northwest did have considerable effect within their own circles and in the cultural spaces where they were most active. The lived experience of many Northwest folk musicians reveals their belief in the power of folk music to create connection and meaning in their own lives. Folk music communities fostered significant relationships and contributions, like those of the Darrington bluegrass musicians or Elizabeth Cotten, that shaped the sound and function of Northwest folk music. The work of the SFS and WCHMS brought folk culture to wider audiences, reinforcing old and new tropes of regional identity. In the 1970s and 80s, the engagement with folk music and folklife occurred on a greater scale with the development of *The Rainy Day Song Book, Washington Songs and Lore,* and the Northwest Folklife Festival. These collaborative projects, which were contested sites over representation and narratives of history, formalized folk culture as official culture and inscribed markers of Washington state identity in the public realm through folk traditions.

Folk songs of the Northwest often positioned the region as a true "Eden...on Puget Sound," a Promised Land for a select category of residents. Songs like "The Old Settler," "Little Cabin in the Cascade Mountains," and "Little Old Log Cabin on my Claim" communicated this literally: they celebrated and memorialized an unspoiled, fruitful paradise in a land free from control. Woody Guthrie's Columbia River ballads cemented the Northwest as a singularly majestic landscape in the public memory, albeit one available for industrial exploitation. The SFS and the WCHMS situated the Northwest as a different kind of Eden: in reaction to sentiments of social dislocation, Northwest folk music communities attempted to create new idealistic communities based in authentic human connection. And finally, enduring events like the Northwest Folklife Festival celebrated regional culture and folk tradition, constructing a broader window for

Northwest belonging. By celebrating this region's desirable qualities, folk music was deployed to buttress a region's sense of itself, to confirm state value, and to legitimize the traditions of its residents. Nevertheless, folk songs shapeshifted, their notes transformed by those that played them across time and place. Folk music recalled an Edenic Puget Sound that could never exist again if it had ever existed at all. Folk music relied on constructs of authenticity and heritage, and folk music communities used these forms of the past to create unstable connections. The constrictive and expansive potential of folk music suggests the plasticity of cultural identity and structures of belonging. They are not as fixed as we'd like them to be.

Interest in and excitement about folk music in the Pacific Northwest continued beyond the 1980s, as did folk music collaborations between musicians and institutions. Notably, the Northwest Folklife Festival operates to this day. Contemporary local interest in folklife and folk traditions reveals the enduring appeal of folk songs to communicate coded and unsteady messages of place and regional pride. The members instrumental to the Seattle Folklore Society and the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society have since shifted their energies elsewhere. A new generation of folk musicians, folklorists, and ethnomusicologists continue to engage in folk music traditions in public and private spaces, deeply rooted in place. Folk songs are still telling our stories.

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